THE TRANSFORMATION OF THE RABBI'S ROLE: CURRICULAR IMPLICATIONS

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Presented to

the Faculty of the

School of Theology at Claremont

In Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree

Doctor of Ministry

by

Lee T. Bycel

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ABSTRACT

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The historic role of the rabbi has essentially been one of teacher and exemplar of Jewish law and lore. Beginning in the medieval period, the rabbi assumed other responsibilities including adjudication, scholarship, ritual supervision, and communal leadership. Gradually the rabbi's role shifted from vocation to profession.

With the emancipation of European Jewry beginning in the late eighteenth century, the rabbinate underwent a radical transformation. As rabbinical jurisdiction over matters of civil law disappeared, the legal authority of the rabbinate eroded. The modern rabbi emerged as a religious functionary in the mold of the Protestant clergy.

Prior to the nineteenth century, rabbis were trained in yeshivot (academies of rabbinic learning) where studies focused exclusively on talmudic law. With the advent of emancipation, the modern rabbinical seminary arose as a Westernized alternative to the yeshivah.

In the 1980s, each of the four major American rabbinical seminaries initiated reviews of their curricula. This project examines these reviews with particular focus on the Reform seminary. All reflect awareness of the need to revise the training of the contemporary rabbi, but each

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still allots the majority of courses to classical Jewish subjects.

Given the similarity of role between contemporary rabbi and Protestant minister, careful attention is given to proposals for curriculum reform offered by Protestant theological educators, especially during the past decade. Models of the ministerial role and aspects of their curricular paradigms offer possibilities for developing a new curriculum for the training of the contemporary Reform rabbi.

This study concludes that current rabbinical curricula have not caught up with the spiritual and social realities that the contemporary rabbi encounters. A new theoretical paradigm of rabbinical training is offered, emphasizing the rabbi's emerging role as mentor and counselor.

The methodology of this study includes a diachronic survey of the rabbinate and rabbinical education, a synchronic study of approaches to theological education, critical evaluation of rabbinical curricula, and constructive synthesis. The particular focus of the study is the contemporary Reform rabbi and the Reform seminary's curriculum. However, the implications of this study are applicable to the contemporary rabbinate as a whole.

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Introduction

This project focuses on the training of rabbis in the contemporary world. Although the role of the rabbi has been transformed in Judaism's transition from the medieval to the modern world, the seminary curriculum has yet to respond to this change. A curriculum designed for the model of the rabbi as religious mentor and counselor has still not emerged.

From late antiquity, the rabbi functioned, for the most part, as a teacher, exemplar, and interpreter of Jewish law (halakhah). However, the Enlightenment in Western and Central Europe and the emancipation of the Jewish population during the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries eroded the traditional authority of the rabbi. The overwhelming majority of Jews abandoned a traditional fidelity to Jewish law, and more Westernized expressions of Judaism arose. Prominent among them was the Reform Movement, which originated in Germany. This movement retained loyalty to the Pentateuch's moral and ethical laws but accepted as binding only those ceremonies and rituals deemed compatible with modern civilization. By the late 1800s, the Reform Movement had taken root in America and the Union of American Hebrew Congregations, founded in 1873, had become an official denominational body for Reform Judaism by the late 1880s.

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Reform Jews did not look to their rabbis for halakhic rulings but for spiritual guidance, pastoral counseling, and theological perspective. Protestant clerical models were more influential than medieval rabbinic antecedents. Indeed, Reform Jews and their clerics were not unique in this regard. While the rabbi's traditional role was more emphasized among Orthodox Jews, even here the rabbi's authority was diminished as the coercive legal structure of the community was dismantled. Among the more secularized majority, the fragmentation of values left many people without a religious anchor. They looked to their rabbis to close the growing chasm between ancestral faith and contemporary life.

However, the education of Reform and other rabbis has not kept pace with the transformed spiritual and social realities and situations that the modern setting entails. This paper calls for a reconsideration of rabbinical training. It requires that rabbis remain learned individuals. This is the foundation of their office. However, I am calling for a novel curriculum that would provide rabbis with the preparation to serve as religious mentors and counselors in a predominantly secular culture.

This project focuses primarily on the Reform rabbi and the curriculum of the Reform rabbinical seminary, the Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion (HUC). However, I believe that most of the discussion applies to all

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contemporary rabbis in America, with the exception of the most traditional, separatist, and insular communities. The curricula of the major denominational seminaries will be reviewed and contrasted with the offerings of HUC so as to illuminate the distinctiveness of the HUC curriculum. The ultimate aim is to focus upon a new curriculum proposal for the training of the Reform rabbi. In so doing, a paradigm for the education of all modern American rabbis will be offered.

Chapter 1 traces the development of the rabbinate from earliest times to the modern period. The transformation of the rabbi's role is discussed in the context of changing Jewish communities and shifting centers of population. The rabbi's ancestral vocation eventually evolved into a clerical profession. The impact of this development, and its effect on the expectations placed on the rabbi, are given close analysis. The diminution of the rabbi's traditional authority has led to role confusion and a significant amount of stress and conflict within the rabbinate. New ways of conceptualizing the rabbi's role are explored with an attempt to define a more viable paradigm for the rabbi in contemporary society.

Chapter 2 discusses the revisions in rabbinical curricula that took place during the 1980s in each of the major seminaries in America: Yeshiva University's Rabbi Isaac Elchanan Theological Seminary (Orthodox), the Jewish

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Theological Seminary (Conservative), the Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion (Reform), and the Reconstructionist Rabbinical College (Reconstructionist). The historical development of the curriculum of each of these seminaries provides a context for understanding how they viewed the challenges of forging an appropriate curriculum for the modern rabbi. A detailed discussion of HUC's 1988 curriculum revision follows. The chapter concludes with a summary of the curricular trends at each of the seminaries and a critique of the areas of consonance and dissonance between rabbinical training and the contemporary rabbinic role.

An analysis of major issues in Protestant theological education is the subject of Chapter 3. The role of the contemporary rabbi in America is quite similar to that of the Protestant minister. There has been extensive discourse on the subject of Protestant theological education, which is reviewed with a special focus on the literature of the past decade. New models of ministry that have been proposed are examined in order to determine their possible implications for the education of the contemporary rabbi.

In Chapter 4, normative conclusions are drawn from the research conducted for this project and, based upon the theoretical model I advocate for the training of the modern American rabbi, a proposal is offered for a new rabbinical curriculum. The curricular proposal is informed by the

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previous discussion of Protestant theological education, by curriculum innovations already developing in rabbinical seminaries, and by my own thoughts based on thirteen years as Dean of HUC's California School. The proposal itself is based on a new conception of the rabbi's role.

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CHAPTER 1

The Rabbinate: Ancient Vocation and Modern Profession

As a profession, the rabbinate is of comparatively recent origin. But as an institution, its roots are ancient, reaching back to the pre-Hellenistic period of Jewish history when the Israelite religion was still officially defined by priest and prophet. While the priesthood was chiefly concerned with ritual and prophylactic functions, it also included the duty to teach the Torah and to pass legal judgments:

> They shall teach Jacob thy judgments and Israel thy law. (Deut. 33:10)
>
> If there arise a matter too hard for thee in judgment . . . then shalt thou come to the priests, the Levites and unto the judge that shall be in those days, and thou shalt inquire . . . and thou shalt observe to do according to all that they shall teach thee. (Deut. 17:8-11)

The importance of the judicial and teaching authority of the priesthood was recognized by the biblical prophets in frequent allusions (e.g., Jer. 2:8; Ezek. 7:26; Hos. 4:6; Micah 3:11; Mal. 2:7). While often understood to be hostile to the priesthood, the prophets did not question its divine sanction. They were not opposed to cultic law but rather to the view that ritual could substitute for righteousness. As religious leaders of ancient Israel, both priest and prophet were precursors of the rabbi.

With the destruction of the Temple in 70 C.E., the leadership role of the priesthood came to an end. A new

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religious vocation emerged in late antique Palestine. Its practitioners were called rabbis. Like priest and prophet, the rabbi laid claim to the authority of divine revelation. But he was distinguished from his predecessors by the manner in which he exercised and legitimized his role.[1] The authority of the priest was based on a divinely ordained hereditary status that empowered him to perform cultic acts, bless the congregation, and administer the holy precincts. In these functions he was, in effect, the ritual intermediary between God and Israel. The prophet, although holding no formal office, claimed authority from divine inspiration. He admonished and exhorted the people in the name of God. The early rabbi, in contrast, based his authority neither on priestly status nor prophetic charisma but on acquired knowledge of Scripture, the oral traditions surrounding it, their interpretation, and their application to daily life. The other key measure of the rabbi's divine authority was the example of his conduct, that is, the extent to which the divine commandments were fulfilled in his own person.

In ancient Judaism, claims to religious leadership were recognized only when they were formally conferred. The Hebrew Bible relates that Moses ordained Joshua by laying

[1] All rabbis were men until the ordination of the first woman rabbi in 1972. Thus, all references to rabbis until that time will be in the masculine form and all subsequent references will be gender neutral.

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his hands upon him (semikhah), thereby transferring his authority (Num. 7:22-23; Deut. 34:9). Moses also ordained the seventy elders who assisted him in governing the Israelite tribes (Num. 11:16-17, 24-25). According to rabbinic tradition, the seventy elders ordained their successors in turn, so that an unbroken chain of ordination proceeded from the days of Moses to the era of the Second Temple.[2]

Before the title of rabbi occurs in Jewish literature, a leadership elite of sages began to emerge in the last two centuries B.C.E. The earliest of these figures date from the Hasmonean period. Like the biblical prophets, they are portrayed as antagonists of kings and rulers. There is no evidence that rabbinical status was hereditary, although later Jewish history saw the establishment of dynastic succession in some communities. The rabbis came from every social stratum, including the priesthood: artisans, farmers, merchants, laborers, and proselytes.[3]

As a designation of title, the term "rabbi" does not appear in extant sources until after 70 C.E., when Roman legions destroyed the Second Temple. The word is derived

[2] Maimonides, Mishnah Sanhedrin 4:2.

[3] For example, Rabbi Joshua was a blacksmith (Babylonian Talmud Berakhot 28a); Rabbi Jose was a tanner (Babylonian Talmud Shabbat 49b); Rabbi Hanina was a shoemaker (Babylonian Talmud Pesachim 113b); Rabbi Huna was a water carrier (Babylonian Talmud Ketubot 105a); and Resh Lakish was once a gladiator (Palestinian Talmud Gittin 4:9, 46a-b).

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from the biblical Hebrew noun meaning "great" or "distinguished," and in postbiblical Hebrew came to denote "master" in contrast to "disciple."[4] In the New Testament, the word "rabbi" (e.g., Mat. 23:7; Jn. 3:2) and its derivate "rabboni" (Jn. 20:16) refer to Jesus of Nazareth, but these appear to be terms of respectful address rather than of formal designation. According to an early rabbinic source, "He who has disciples and whose disciples again have disciples is called 'Rabbi.'"[5]

Lawrence Hoffman has shown that at first there was no specific term for rabbinic appointment nor a ritual marking rabbinic ordination.[6] By the end of the second century C.E., formal rabbinic ordination (semikhah)[7] appears to have been established. According to the Mishnah, ordination required the presence of three elders, at least one of whom

[4] Mishnah Avot 1:3.

[5] Tosefta Eduyyot, end.

[6] "In late antique Palestine, Rabbis were 'ordained' in that they were appointed to specific functions as communal workers. They were part of the civil service of their day. . . . If there was a liturgical ceremony associated with rabbinic appointments, we do not know anything about it." Lawrence A. Hoffman, "The Origins of Ordination," in Rabbinic Authority: Papers Presented before the Ninety-First Annual Convention of the Central Conference of American Rabbis, ed. Elliot L. Stevens, vol. 90, pt. 2 (New York: Central Conference of American Rabbis, 1982), 89.

[7] The original term was probably minnui, lit. "appointment." See Hoffman, 88-90.

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was himself ordained.[8] In the Land of Israel under Roman rule, it also became necessary for rabbis to obtain the consent of the Jewish patriarch (nasi) before ordaining disciples. Semikhah could only be granted in the Holy Land. Likewise the title "Rabbi" was confined to ordained sages residing in the Land of Israel; their Babylonian colleagues could not receive semikhah and were called "Rab" instead of "Rabbi."[9]

Modern scholars do not know a great deal about individual rabbis of this era. Unlike contemporary Hellenistic philosophers or Christian holy men, the rabbis of Palestine and Babylonia had no biographers. What can be learned about them must be extracted from the vast legal and exegetical works of late antique rabbinic literature, including the Mishnah and Tosefta (ca. 200 C.E.), the Talmuds of Palestine (ca. 400) and Babylonia (ca. 500), and the tannaitic and amoraic Midrashim (ca. 500). While this literature reveals much of the rabbis' intellectual lives, the evidence of their religious vocation and communal role must be assembled from documents of assorted form and origin.[10]

[8] Mishnah Sanhedrin 1:3; compare Palestinian Talmud Sanhedrin 1:3, 19a.

[9] Babylonian Talmud Sanhedrin 136a-b; Babylonian Talmud Bava Metzia 85b.

[10] Much of the following discussion relies upon Robert Kirschner, "The Vocation of Holiness in Late Antiquity," Vigiliae Christianae 38 (1984): 105-24, especially 114-19.

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From the end of the second century C.E., the rabbis of Palestine functioned in two realms: teaching Torah to disciples and assuming local leadership in public life. Rabbinic ordination did not bestow formal duties but established the competence to offer public instruction and adjudicate cases of Jewish law (halakhah). In Babylonia, the rabbinical movement first appeared when Palestinian refugees from the failed revolt of 132-35 began to establish schools in Babylonian Jewish communities. Acting under the Jewish Exilarch's authority, these sages officiated in Jewish courts, dealing with matters of both religious and civil law.

In both Palestine and Babylonia, the rabbinical schools were devoted primarily to Torah study. "He [who studies Scripture and Mishnah] is worthy of inheriting two worlds, this one and the world to come."[11] Apart from the information to be mastered, the act of study itself came to be considered a kind of sacrament, an act of revelation. To be a rabbi, as Jacob Neusner has shown, was a kind of divine ritual.[12] To learn from a master and to emulate his personal example was, in effect, to come closer to God.[13]

[11] Babylonian Talmud Hullin 44b.

[12] Jacob Neusner, A History of the Jews in Babylonia, 5 vols. (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1965-70), 3:102-10, 130-49; 4:279-309; 5:146-68.

[13] Robert Kirschner, "Imitatio Rabbini," Journal for the Study of Judaism 17 (June 1986): 70-79.

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Thus the disciple's first duty was to his master. If the disciple went to recover lost property, even if some of it belonged to his own father, "what is the master's takes precedence, for his [the disciple's] father brought him into this world, but his master that taught him wisdom brings him into the world to come."[14] When listening to the master's discourse, the disciple was to sit bent over.[15] He was not allowed to cough or spit in the master's presence.[16] In no event could he presume to decide a matter of halakhah if his master was nearby.[17] It was the dictum of one sage that "fear of the master [should be] as the fear of heaven."[18] As part of his apprenticeship for elevation to rabbinical status, the disciple was required to wait personally upon the master's needs. In effect, the disciple was both student and servant. From this vantage point he could observe the master's conduct in every detail. According to the Babylonian Talmud, one ardent disciple followed his master to the privy; another hid under his master's bed during marital intercourse. Both disciples explained: "It

[14] Mishnah Bava Metzia 2:11.

[15] Compare Babylonian Talmud Shabbat 17a; Babylonian Talmud Sanhedrin 24a.

[16] Babylonian Talmud Erusin 99a.

[17] Compare Babylonian Talmud Berakhot 31b; Leviticus Rabbah 20:6.

[18] Mishnah Avot 4:12.

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is Torah, and I need to learn."[19] Palestinian sources, too, attest to this regard for the rabbinic elite in all its living dimensions: "by its walk, by its speech, and by its dress in the streets."[20] Robert Kirschner has argued that

> as the expositor and exemplar of God's revelation, the sage defined its content and its living form. Consequently even his automatic or spontaneous gestures were thought to evince qualities of holiness claiming the disciple's reverent attention. . . . While the rabbi was not thought to be divine, he is portrayed in rabbinic literature as the conduit of divine authority and the instrument of its transmission.[21]

In late antiquity, the rabbinic vocation combined the teaching of Torah with the interpretation of halakhah and the leadership of the community. Its hierarchical and ceremonial etiquette reflected the social arrangements of time and place comparable to the status of Christian monks, Neoplatonist philosophers, and Zoroastrian magi. By the post-talmudic era, however, the image and function of the rabbi had changed. With the decline of the Babylonian academies in the tenth and eleventh centuries, new centers of rabbinical learning emerged in Jewish communities elsewhere in the Diaspora, particularly in Spain, Italy, France, and the Rhineland. No longer reliant upon Babylonian religious authority, these communities began to

[19] Babylonian Talmud Berakhot 62a.

[20] Sifre Deuteronomy 343; compare Palestinian Talmud Bikkurim 3:3 65c; Palestinian Talmud Nedarim 10:10, 42b.

[21] Kirschner, "Vocation of Holiness," 118, 119.

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govern themselves, abiding by the jurisdiction of their own rabbis. New academies (yeshivot) arose, and both the creation and circulation of rabbinic literature proliferated throughout the Jewish world.

Ordination standards seem to have varied from one locality to the next. According to a medieval Spanish rabbi, Judah ben Barzilai of Barcelona (fl. late 11th - early 12th c.), a rabbi required a writ of ordination (ketav masmikh) designating the recipient by three possible titles: rabbi, rav, or hakham (lit. "wise one").[22] Abiding by the tradition that authentic ordination was possible only in the Holy Land, there was no laying on of hands; in the absence of an ordaining rabbi, rabbinic authority was conferred by the elders of the synagogue or the community. A document was issued acknowledging the recipient's learning and qualifications to judge matters of religious law.

However, the rabbi's authority was not necessarily recognized elsewhere in the Diaspora. It extended only as far as the community willing to accept it. From the fourteenth century onward, the communal practice developed of designating one rabbi for one locality (mara de-atra). Other rabbis in his community were supposed to submit to his authority, a concept that took a long time to implement and was never fully established. The medieval rabbinate was for

[22] Harold Saperstein, "The Origin and Authority of the Rabbi," in Stevens, Rabbinic Authority, 18.

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many centuries characterized by local or regional autonomy. Only elite rabbinic scholars exercised influence beyond their immediate circles.

After the Black Death epidemic in the mid-fourteenth century, a period of confusion and intellectual decline followed among Ashkenazic (Northern European) Jewry. Religious leadership suffered from a want of qualified scholars. In some cases, illiterate men were inducted into rabbinical office. Again the need was felt for more formal and rigorous standards of ordination. In 1370, R. Meir b. Baruch Halevi of Vienna (d. 1404) issued an ordinance (taqqanah) requiring that a rabbi receive authorization from a recognized rabbinical scholar as proof of competence to interpret halakhah. The title granted would be morenu (lit. "our teacher"). Only a rabbi with this credential would be eligible for the new office of rav ha-ir, "rabbi of the community." The duties of the community rabbi in the Middle Ages included halakhic adjudication, public instruction, ritual supervision, and sometimes preaching in the synagogue. The innovation in this era was the notion of a contractual relationship with the Jewish community: the rabbinate was now a community office, with specified jurisdictions, duties, and prerogatives. Neither the scholarly stature nor the social reputation of the rabbi was contingent upon the ancient hierarchy of Palestinian ordination or the authority of the Babylonian academies.

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The decentralization of the rabbinate was complete.

This is not to say that continuity with the rabbinic past was broken. The rabbinate carried over into the Middle Ages a core of historic concepts and attitudes. Its active elements still included the scholarly, juridical, spiritual, and exemplary roles that first emerged in late antiquity. But within this paradigm, more specific functions were introduced. The supervision of marriage and divorce proceedings became central to the rabbinical office, not only because halakhic expertise was required but for a new reason: the payment for performing such functions became part of the local rabbi's communal stipend.

Traditionally rabbis were scholars who served their communities without pay, earning their living in other ways. In time, the custom developed of compensating the rabbi for specific services performed such as the supervision of kashrut (dietary law) requirements or the execution of a get (writ of divorce). With the professionalization of the rabbinate in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, salaries for community rabbis became common. In many Jewish communities, the hardship of pursuing both learning and livelihood was severe, particularly in times of persecution. R. Simeon b. Zemah Duran (1361-1444), for example, was a physician until he was forced to flee Spain in an era of mounting Judeophobia. Finding refuge in Algiers, he soon

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learned that there was little hope of pursuing his vocation as a doctor there.

> I resolved to make a practical decision for myself to take a salary from the congregation and to be appointed as rabbi and judge over them. . . . Medicine is a wisdom which honorably supports its practitioners in the Christian lands. . . . But persecution was decreed in all those lands, and we were left with only our lives. . . . If the profession of medicine could have supplied me a livelihood, in this land where we have settled, we would not have come to this pass.[23]

Such circumstances were not uncommon among medieval Jewry. Enduring periodic persecutions, including mass expulsions from the Rhineland, France, Spain, and Portugal, Jewish refugees often found themselves in half-organized communities without rabbinical leadership. Exiled rabbis, for their part, often found themselves in need of a livelihood. In order to enable R. Simeon to accept employment, a formula was devised whereby his salary was designated as sekhar battalah, viz., compensation for loss of time due to occupation with rabbinical duties. This remains the basis in Jewish law for compensating a rabbi until this day.

In the deliberations of the communal synod of Castilian Jewry (1432), the contractual duties and emoluments of the communal rabbi were specified as follows:

> A community having forty families or more shall endeavor, so far as possible, to maintain among

[23] Commentary to Mishnah Avot 4:5, cited in Solomon Freehof, A Treasury of Responsa (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1963), 82-83.

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> themselves a rabbi who will teach them law (halakhot) and lore (aggadot). The community must maintain him reasonably. His salary shall be paid from the income of the tax on meat and wine . . . or from the education (talmud torah) fund, so that he shall not have to beg his livelihood from any of the leaders of the community, so that he may reprove them and guide them in the service of the Creator. . . . Moreover we ordain that each rabbi shall maintain an academy where those who wish to learn may study the halakhah.[24]

R. Don David b. Yahyah, Rabbi of Naples in the first half of the sixteenth century, included in a responsum an account of his routine duties: to teach Talmud and commentaries, decide religious and legal questions, act as judge in litigations between Jews, preach in the synagogue on the Sabbath, and to carry on the official correspondence of the community. R. David described his particular devotion to the instruction of younger children, whose course of study included not only halakhah but biblical cantillation, grammar, and logic.[25] Yet no matter how devoted, skilled, or versatile the rabbi, the professionalization of the rabbinate introduced a chronic tension in relation to the community leaders upon whom the rabbi was dependent for his livelihood. R. Judah Loew b. Bezalel of Prague (ca. 1525-1609), one of the most revered

[24] Cited by Louis Finkelstein in Jewish Self-Government in the Middle Ages (New York: Jewish Theological Seminary of America, 1924), 354.

[25] Alexander Marx, "Glimpses of the Life of an Italian Rabbi in the First Half of the 16th Century," HUC Annual 1 (1924): 612-13.

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and influential medieval rabbis, was candid about the loss of rabbinical stature:

> Woe to us that the rabbi is dependent on the heads of the community, that every year or every three years his appointment is reviewed. How should he not fear, since he is in their power, conscious of the possibility that they may not renew his contract?[26]

Until the early nineteenth century, rabbis were trained solely in yeshivot, academies of higher Jewish learning.[27] The yeshivah did not develop as a seminary or professional training institution but as a resource for the education of the people as a whole. The nearly exclusive subject of study, especially among Ashkenazic Jewry, was the Babylonian Talmud in the original Hebrew and Aramaic, often combined with ethical tracts and devotional works. The method of study consisted of the recitation and discussion of talmudic texts and medieval rabbinic commentaries. Both were analyzed in minute exegetical detail. The pedagogical

[26] From R. Judah Loew b. Bezalel's ethical treatise Netivot Olam (1596), quoted by Saperstein in Stevens, 20.

[27] Unfortunately there is no authoritative history of the yeshivot in Europe. Available material includes Jacob Mann, "Modern Rabbinical Seminaries and Other Institutions of Jewish Learning," in CCAR Yearbook: Thirty-Sixth Annual Convention, ed. Isaac E. Marcuson, vol. 35 (Cincinnati: Central Conference of American Rabbis, 1925), 295-310; Zevi Scharfstein, History of Jewish Education in Modern Times, 3 vols. (in Hebrew) (New York: Ogen, 1945-49), particularly vols. 1 and 3; Samuel K. Mirsky, ed., Jewish Institutions of Higher Learning in Europe: Their Development and Destruction (in Hebrew) (New York: Ogen, 1956); and a survey article by Abraham Menes, "The Yeshivot in Eastern Europe," in The Jewish People: Past and Present, vol. 2 (New York: Jewish Encyclopedic Handbooks, 1948), 108-18.

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approach might differ from one yeshivah to the next. Some teachers were more gifted scholars than others, and students would often travel great distances at great sacrifice to study under a renowned master of Talmud. Whether of greater or lesser distinction, all yeshivot shared a reverent orientation to the received texts of rabbinic Judaism. Yet yeshivah study was never purely literary: it was as concerned with religious piety, ethical conduct, and moral character as with the intellectual mastery of talmudic disciplines. As both scholarly and religious exemplar, the rabbi of the academy (rosh yeshivah) typically lived with his students. The idea of Torah lishmah (lit. "Torah for its own sake"), i.e., study for a higher spiritual purpose, was the yeshivah ideal. One did not study to become a rabbi but to become a learned and pious Jew. The acquisition of practical or pastoral skills was not a goal of the yeshivah. There were no entrance examinations, graduations, or tuition fees. The support of teachers and students was provided by community patrons who considered it a religious duty to subsidize Torah study.

The professionalization of the rabbinate led to modifications in the yeshivah curriculum. In Ashkenazi communities, the daily requirements of rabbinical leadership demanded halakhic and ritual expertise, talmudic literacy, the rendering of legal decisions, and the resolution of Jewish civil disputes. The new professional class of rabbis

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required above all familiarity with various sections of the Shulhan Arukh, a sixteenth century digest of talmudic law regarded as authoritative for contemporary Jewish practice. However, rabbinical ordination (semikhah) was not awarded for this competence alone. An aspiring student could not set his sights on the mantle of Jewish religious leadership until he had reached a level of proficiency in talmudic learning recognized by teacher and peer alike. This accomplishment was understood to confer not only the intellectual but the spiritual attributes necessary for rabbinical office.

In Renaissance Italy, however, the situation was different: a period of unprecedented cultural activity ushered Jewish scholars into an array of secular disciplines and languages. Achievements in philosophy, ethics, theology, liturgical poetry, art, drama, lexicography, printing, and translations from Latin and Arabic into Hebrew (and vice versa) were often the work of Italian or Spanish emigre rabbis trained in the talmudic academies of Rome and southern Italy.[28] Where Ashkenazi rabbinical scholarship of the Middle Ages was largely confined to the talmudic idiom, Sephardi (Spanish-Italian-North African Jews) rabbis composed and published works in both Hebrew and vernacular languages.

[28] Aaron Mirsky, "Italy," in Encyclopaedia Judaica (Jerusalem: Keter, 1971), 9:1120-122.

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With the dawn of the European Enlightenment in the eighteenth century, the traditional patterns of Jewish communal life and rabbinical authority began to erode. Allowed to enter the majority culture for the first time, empowered by newly conferred political and civil equality, major Jewish populations in Western and Central Europe broke away from the strictures of halakhah. The semi-autonomous structure which governed Jewish communities for nearly a thousand years was suddenly disintegrating. Rabbinical courts of law lost compulsory, and finally voluntary, jurisdiction over disputes between Jews. The advent of capitalism and the Industrial Revolution launched Jews into a new world of commerce with borders far beyond the rabbinical world, bringing them into contact with values and norms that were often inimical to rabbinic traditions.

Motivated by a desire to reconcile their ancestral religion with the new age of humanism and science, and spurred on by the wish to be accepted as equals in the majority society, many Jews began to question the inherited structure of Jewish communal organization and rabbinical authority. As more and more Jews embraced the prevailing gentile culture, the rabbi's prestige declined and his influence waned. Outside of the still traditional Jewish communities of Eastern Europe, disputes brought to the rabbis were increasingly confined to ritual or theoretical

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concerns. In much of Western Europe, rabbinical scholarship was moving from the center to the margins of Jewish life.

The Reform Movement in Judaism originated in Germany in the early decades of the nineteenth century.[29] Its founders were not rabbis; on the contrary, in some instances the Movement was directed against the rabbis.[30] Its first reform attempts were limited to the westernization of traditional synagogue worship. Especially conscious of those practices that gave the appearance of foreignness, the early reformers abolished the wearing of phylacteries and prayer shawls, abbreviated the liturgy, and introduced the pipe organ, choir, and prayers in the vernacular.[31] The Reform Movement found welcome on American shores, where Jewish civil and religious liberties were already well established. The compilers of the Charleston, South Carolina, prayerbook (1830) introduced its radical revisions

[29] For a comprehensive history of the Reform Movement, see Michael A. Meyer, Response to Modernity: A History of the Reform Movement in Judaism (New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 1988).

[30] Samuel S. Cohon, "Authority in Judaism," HUC Annual 11 (1936): 633.

[31] With respect to clerical vestments, the influence of the Protestant Church was marked. Until recent times in England, the rabbi typically wore a clerical collar, while French rabbis wore vestments identical to their Protestant counterparts. In the early twentieth century, the British Chief Rabbi at official functions wore the silk hat with cockade of the Anglican bishop. Louis Isaac Rabinowitz, "Rabbi, Rabbinate," in Encyclopaedia Judaica (Jerusalem: Keter, 1971), 13:1452-453.

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> for all those who think the period has arrived when the Jew should break in pieces the scepter of Rabbinical power and assert his attribute as a free agent, obedient only to the laws of God, and responsible for his thoughts and actions to the merciful Creator alone.[32]

Such convictions obviously threatened the authority and even the possibility of rabbinical leadership. In the wake of the European Enlightenment, Jewish emancipation, and the advent of the Reform Movement, the Jewish religious world was fractured. The centuries-old community structure of European Jewry gave way to nuclear synagogues organized as congregations. Eventually three major denominations emerged: Orthodox, representing the traditional claim to halakhic authority; Conservative, representing a modernized version of rabbinic Judaism; and Reform, representing the most radical challenge to inherited rabbinical tradition. Although the Orthodox Movement sought to sustain the millennial rabbinic model, it, too, was affected by the seismic shift in the Jewish landscape. Still viewed as a scholar of Jewish law, the Orthodox rabbi no longer functioned primarily as a judge issuing public edicts and enforcing communal standards. The altered context of Jewish life narrowed this role to an elite of halakhic experts who argued their views in rabbinical journals, far removed from popular Jewish discourse.

[32] Cited by Cohon, 633, n. 138.

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For the Conservative and especially the Reform rabbi, the change was still more drastic. With its rejection of traditionally received halakhah, the Reform Movement transformed the very concept of rabbi, introducing a radically new value system and a configuration of rabbinical roles alien to the medieval model of scholar, judge, and communal authority. Perhaps the greatest influence on the paradigm of the Reform, and to a lesser extent the Conservative, rabbi was the contemporary model of the Protestant clergy in Western Europe and in the United States. Given the eagerness of many Jews to assimilate into the majority culture, the Protestant model was particularly compelling. Having lived as a persecuted minority for most of their European history, the Jews had long been confined to largely premodern forms of worship and liturgy. Many were deeply impressed by the aesthetics of the Protestant church. The Reform rabbi especially came to incorporate functional aspects of the Protestant ministry, most notably preaching, officiating at worship services, conducting weddings, funerals, and baby namings, visiting hospitals, delivering invocations and benedictions, and participating in civic causes in largely ceremonial roles. While some of these duties have Jewish precedent, the aggregate amounts to a departure from the rabbi's historic role.

Preaching in the vernacular language came to occupy a place of prime importance in the modern rabbinate, even

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among Orthodox rabbis. The rabbis of medieval Europe typically addressed the Jewish community in the synagogue only twice per year, on the Sabbaths preceding the Day of Atonement and Passover. These addresses were not sermons but discourses on the halakhic observances associated with the approaching holy day. The modern rabbi, in contrast, was expected to speak on every Sabbath, every holiday, and virtually every ceremonial occasion. The archetype was not the halakhic discourse but the sermon or homily. In Reform synagogues, the rabbi's lectern was moved to the center of the sanctuary, facing the congregation, elevating the role of the rabbi as preacher. By 1906, an American Reform rabbi could claim that the preaching function of the rabbi

> voices the lasting impulses of Judaism and makes the present living religious experience take its place in the great historic life of Israel. . . . It is he who becomes the living exponent of the Judaism of his day. . . . The scholar in the closet studies and interprets the history of Judaism; the Rabbi, learning from and speaking to his people, makes the history of Judaism.[33]

The modern rabbi was also expected to devote much of his time to pastoral activity, establishing personal relationships with his congregants, visiting the sick, officiating at ritual occasions, and sharing family celebrations or bereavements. In addition, he was expected

[33] Samuel Schulman, "The Function of the Rabbi in His Relation to His People," in CCAR Yearbook: Seventeenth Annual Convention, eds. Tobias Schanfarber and Samuel Hirshberg, vol. 16, app. A (Cincinnati: Central Conference of American Rabbis, 1906), 205, 206.

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to take a major role in the educational, philanthropic, and purely social activities of the congregation. Under the dual influence of Jewish emancipation and the paradigm of the Protestant clergy, the modern rabbi emerged as a religious leader with one foot in each world, the majority culture and the minority faith of his forbears. For his congregation, the divide between the two worlds was shrinking.

With the crumbling of ghetto walls in Western and Central Europe, new tendencies were felt in higher Jewish learning. Many now regarded the yeshivah as an anachronism, the relic of a vanishing civilization. In the early nineteenth century, young Jewish intellectuals in Germany began to call for a Wissenschaft des Judentums ("academic study of Judaism") that would subject Judaism to critical inquiry and modern methods of research. Under the influence of this movement, demand grew for a more westernized approach to Jewish education. For the first time, institutions were established specifically for the training of rabbis, with a curriculum broadened beyond the mastery of Talmud. The new rabbi would be equipped with an advanced secular education in tandem with the traditional rabbinical curriculum. The sacred texts would be studied not only with the medieval commentaries but also with the apparatus of historical scholarship, including the disciplines of archaeology, classical philology, and editorial text

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criticism. While the new curriculum still centered on the canon of rabbinic literature, it expanded to include Jewish philosophy and theology, Jewish history, homiletics, Hebrew grammar, and cognate languages. The new institution that emerged was no longer a yeshivah but a rabbinical seminary.

The first leaders of the seminaries were rabbis and scholars who had either taken their first steps away from religious orthodoxy or broken with it completely. They were the ideological precursors of Conservative and Reform Judaism. By 1873, however, even the impeccably orthodox R. Esriel Hildesheimer (1820-1899), a world-renowned Jewish scholar, founded the Berlin Rabbinical Seminary for the training of Orthodox rabbis. While it differed from the more liberal seminaries in its religious standards and curriculum, it was no longer a yeshivah: its mode of rabbinical education included, but was not confined to, the Talmud; its method of study, at least for subjects other than Talmud, was based on the methods of the secular university; and its chief purpose was not Torah study for its own sake but the academic and professional preparation of rabbis to serve the Jewish community. Indeed, its graduates were required to earn doctoral degrees from a secular university as a requirement for ordination.[34]

[34] See David Ellenson, Rabbi Esriel Hildesheimer and the Creation of a Modern Jewish Orthodoxy, Judaic Studies Series (Tuscaloosa: Univ. of Alabama Press, 1990).

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The first rabbinical seminary was probably the Instituto Convitto Rabbinico, established in Padua in 1829.[35] In France, the Ecole Centrale Rabbinique was established in Metz in 1830, moving to Paris in 1859 as the Seminaire Israélite de France. The most famous rabbinical seminary in Europe was the Juedisch-Theologisches Seminar of Breslau, founded by the noted rabbinical scholar Zacharias Frankel in 1854. The next year, Jews' College was founded in London. In Berlin, the Juedische Hochschule was founded in 1872; reflecting its modern approach to Jewish scholarship, it changed its name in 1883 to Lehranstalt fuer die Wissenschaft des Judentums.

It was not without resistance that the rabbinical seminaries spread across Europe. They were bitterly contested by the rabbis and yeshivah heads of the traditional school, who saw the seminaries as a dangerous and even lethal departure from ancestral custom. In those regions of Eastern Europe largely unaffected by western trends, traditional rabbis still dominated the religious life of the Jewish community. Hasidism, a spiritual movement within Judaism emphasizing inward piety and charismatic leadership, was deeply influential in Eastern

[35] It was closed in 1871 but reopened in Rome in 1887 as the Collegio Rabbinico Italiana. In 1899, it moved to Florence until 1932, when it moved back to Rome. It was finally closed down by the Fascist regime in 1939. Louis Isaac Rabinowitz, "Rabbinical Seminaries," in Encyclopaedia Judaica (Jerusalem: Keter, 1971), 13:1463-465.

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Europe. Dynastic rabbinical succession was characteristic of many Hasidic communities; the rabbi was often regarded as a zaddik (lit. "righteous one"), a holy man with a unique relationship to God. Hasidism flourished in those Eastern Europe lands least affected by Jewish emancipation. In Russia and Poland, for example, rabbinical seminaries never struck root. In Hungary, polemics between the Orthodox community and the advocates of modern culture were particularly vehement. Yeshivot flourished there throughout the nineteenth century. Under the leadership of R. Moses Sofer (1762-1839) of Pressburg, the medieval pattern of Jewish religious life and rabbinical learning persisted in Hungarian communities and beyond them. Only with World War II and the Holocaust, when most of Eastern European Jewry was annihilated, did the yeshivot disappear.

In the United States, where the immigrant Jewish population had swelled beyond one million by the turn of the twentieth century, the traditional yeshivah never took hold. Removed geographically and culturally from the religious orthodoxy of the Old World, American Jewry readily adopted the seminary model of rabbinical training. The three major Jewish religious movements, as well as a newer and much smaller movement, Reconstructionism (1922),[36] each supported

[36] The Reconstructionist Movement was established by Rabbi Mordecai Kaplan (1881-1983) on the philosophy that Judaism was an "evolving religious civilization" in which ritual, culture, religion, and ethics all play a part.

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their own seminary. The first was the Hebrew Union College, founded by Isaac Mayer Wise in Cincinnati in 1875 to serve a non-denominational "American Judaism," but fully Reform-oriented by the late 1880s.[37] Moderate Orthodox established the Jewish Theological Seminary in New York City in 1886, but by the first decade of the twentieth century it had become a center for Conservative Judaism. The Orthodox Movement in America, seeking to combine the piety of the East European yeshivah with the progressive methods of the Hildesheimer seminary in Berlin, founded the R. Isaac Elchanan Theological Seminary in New York City in 1896[38] (later part of Yeshiva University) and the Talmudic College of Chicago in 1922. The newest seminary, the Reconstructionist Rabbinical College, was established in 1968 in Philadelphia.

The Holocaust in Nazi-occupied Europe took its fearful toll on the rabbinical seminaries no less than on the yeshivot. With the lone exception of the Landesrabbinerschule in Budapest, all the seminaries in central and eastern Europe ceased to exist. In the postwar era, the centers of rabbinical training and Jewish higher

[37] In 1922, Stephen S. Wise established another liberal non-denominational seminary, the Jewish Institute of Religion, in New York City. It merged with Hebrew Union College in 1950.

[38] In 1915, RIETS merged with Yeshiva Eitz Chaim, which was established in 1886.

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learning shifted to the United States and to the new State of Israel.

In different measures, whether Orthodox, Conservative, or Reform, the first modern rabbis were a distillation of their European precursors: the medieval rav, talmudic master and halakhic decisor, his influence commensurate with his scholarship; the East European rebbe, the Hasidic man of piety, deriving his authority from personal or dynastic charisma; and, beginning in the nineteenth century, the West European rabbiner, the professionally trained religious leader of wide culture, introducing the Jew to the gentile world and the gentile world to Judaism. To various degrees defined by denomination, the role of the modern rabbi was also shaped by the model of Christian clergy in Europe and America: minister, pastor, preacher, priest, and missionary.

For all their differences in ideology and orientation, the three major denominations of modern Judaism, as well as the Reconstructionist Movement, developed similar expectations of their rabbis. Three fundamental elements of the Orthodox, Conservative, Reform, and Reconstructionist rabbinical roles attested to a common paradigm: (1) all four types of rabbis were engaged in organizing the Jewish community around the synagogue; (2) all came to perform a similar complex of functions, including teaching, preaching (in the vernacular), pastoral visitation and counseling, ceremonial performance, administrative duties, and community

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representation; and (3) all continued to regard themselves as the lineal successors and contemporary voices of Jewish religious authority.[39]

In the discourse of the modern rabbinate, it is the issue of authority that is most problematic. The changes wrought by the forces of Jewish acculturation and assimilation have undermined traditional religious authority structures and the legitimations and value systems upon which they relied. Even the Orthodox rabbi can typically no longer expect full or automatic acquiescence to his authority. In matters of ritual supervision, such as the dietary laws (kashrut) or Passover food preparation, the Orthodox rabbi is the recognized authority. But with the exception of a few isolated Hasidic communities, compliance with broader halakhic standards cannot be enforced. Jewish observance has become purely volitional, a self-imposed discipline. The imperative authority of the rabbi, characterized by the availability of organized sanctions and communal coercion, is no more.[40] The rabbi is left with only influential authority, which by suasion or personal

[39] See Jerome E. Carlin and Saul H. Mendlovitz, "The American Rabbi: A Religious Specialist Responds to Loss of Authority," in Understanding American Judaism, ed. Jacob Neusner, vol. 1 (New York: KTAV Publishing House, 1975), 165-213.

[40] It should be noted, moreover, that the widely assumed power of the rabbinical office in former days is not substantiated by historical sources. As Harold Saperstein concludes in Stevens, 24: "The struggle between rabbi and laymen is a continuous element of Jewish social history."

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example seeks to inspire assent. For the Conservative and especially the Reform rabbi, the loss of authority is virtually complete. Except for the narrow realm authorized by the state--for example, the authority to sign a marriage license--the non-Orthodox rabbi wields no coercive power.

> The rabbi is no longer defined as the expounder of the law. His authority derives not from scholarly competence but from his own attributes of personality. The Reform rabbi whose word and deed have won him the confidence of his congregation wields authority in his congregation.[41]

The rabbi as here described is set adrift; the tradition of divine origin that rabbis represent can no longer compel their congregations. They are still called "rabbi," but their forbears would hardly recognize them. As Bernard Bamberger has argued, the office of the modern rabbi is related to the earlier forms of Jewish religious leadership by a tie of historical continuity, but he or she "presents so drastic a change in both function and temper as to constitute a virtually new profession."[42]

One dramatic change which reflects this shift in the rabbinate has been the relatively recent decision by the non-Orthodox seminaries to ordain women. In 1972, Hebrew Union College ended the historic exclusion of women in the rabbinate with the ordination of Sally Priesand. The

[41] Jacob P. Rudin, "The Authority of the Rabbi: A Symposium," CCAR Journal 10 (Oct. 1962): 8.

[42] Bernard J. Bamberger, "The American Rabbi--His Changing Role," Judaism: A Quarterly Journal 3 (Fall 1954): 488.

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Reconstructionist Rabbinical College began ordaining women two years later, and in 1985, the Jewish Theological Seminary ordained the Conservative Movement's first woman rabbi.

To date, over three hundred women have been ordained. In 1994, they comprise approximately half of the student body at the three non-Orthodox seminaries. The ordination of women has led to a reclaiming of women's voices which had traditionally been silenced, a growing consciousness of the need to reshape and create new Jewish rituals that relate to both women and men, and the utilization by many non-Orthodox Jews of gender-neutral liturgical language which has significant implications for both theology and Jewish practice.

Many women rabbis have expressed priorities in their approaches to vocation and family that differ from prevailing models. Rabbi Janet Marder summarizes these distinctive values as "those of balance, intimacy, and empowerment."[43] Women rabbis seek to find a balance between their personal and professional lives. They tend to value more personal relationships with congregants. Instead of a hierarchical model, they often prefer collaborative effort and empowering others to play active roles in Jewish life. Rabbi Laura Geller, at a conference celebrating the

[43] Janet Marder, "How Women Are Changing the Rabbinate," Reform Judaism 19 (Summer 1991): 4-8, 41.

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twentieth anniversary of women in the rabbinate, articulated this transformation:

> The impact of women rabbis on Judaism begins with the revolutionary idea that women's experience ought to be acknowledged and valued. . . . It means that women are subjects as well as objects, that women are fully part of the tradition. It means we must wrestle with our sacred texts to hear the voices of women just as we need to wrestle with the structure of our modern Jewish institutions to make room for women's commitment and styles. It means that we must listen to the views of others who have been silent or invisible in our tradition.[44]

Women rabbis have questioned the traditional roles of the rabbi and the hierarchical nature of the synagogue. Many have emphasized the importance of values that include cooperation, mutuality, and equality in the exercise of religious leadership. Nonetheless, they, too, are faced with the more fundamental problems of diminished rabbinical authority and changing role that have affected their male colleagues.

A look at the surface of Jewish religious life in the United States does not immediately reflect the radical change of rabbinical status. Sociologist Nathan Glazer has described the apparent stability of American Judaism.[45] In

[44] Laura Geller, "From Equality to Transformation: The Challenge of Women's Rabbinic Leadership," paper delivered at the Women's Rabbinic Network Conference, Oakland, Calif., 21-24 March 1993, photocopy.

[45] Nathan Glazer, "The Function of the Rabbi," in CCAR Yearbook: Sixty-Eighth Annual Convention, ed. Sidney L. Regner, vol. 77 (New York: Central Conference of American Rabbis, 1968), 130-46.

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the twentieth century, he notes, no great waves of religious change have swept through the synagogues. While the entry of women into non-Orthodox clergy and synagogue leadership is a historic development, it has not changed the denominational structure of the Jewish community. The three major branches, Orthodox, Conservative, and Reform, remain. There may be new tendencies and aspiring movements (Reconstructionist), but they have had only marginal impact on the congregations or their rabbis. There has been little significant change in the rituals of public worship or of private practice. While the advent of the State of Israel has had an enormous effect on contemporary Jewish identity, it has had a negligible impact on the religious beliefs of American Jewry. Yet if so little has changed for the congregation, why has so much changed for the rabbi?

Part of the answer lies, as discussed above, in the Jewish religious reforms of the nineteenth century, which nullified rabbinical legal authority and sought the acculturation of religious practice. I have also noted the influence of prevailing Christian clerical models, which emphasize the ministerial and pastoral roles. But a more recent social trend has speeded the reduction of rabbinical status: the coming to power and influence of a generation of American Jews affected by the anti-intellectual and anti-authority mood of the late 1960s. A great number of these young Jews emerged from the defiance of that era as

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secularists with a pronounced distaste for "organized religion" and religious authority. Those who did affiliate with local synagogues did not describe themselves as "religious," nor did they evidence the same deference for the rabbi still typical of their parents' generation. Their patterns of affiliation and participation in the synagogue more closely resembled that of customers, picking and choosing among various services but refraining from personal involvement or commitment. The attitude toward the rabbi is also more in keeping with that of customer than of congregant. A contemporary Reform rabbi portrays the American synagogue today as

> a voluntaristic agency, among many other agencies, serving the temporary needs of a part-time Jewish group. Community is the wrong appellation, for the word implies a group of people sharing a common fund of values. The Jews I know and serve constitute by and large an enclave of disparate individuals sharing very few Jewish values. . . .
>
> Before one can make inroads to create understanding and commitment and loyalty to Judaism, one's charges have resigned from the congregation either because they feel they no longer need the service station or because, in this highly mobile society, they have literally moved away. . . . They expect little and want less than what we rabbis want to give them.[46]

More optimistic assessments of the modern rabbi's prospects have been advanced. Writing in 1954, Reform rabbi Bernard Bamberger envisioned "far greater possibilities as

[46] Louis J. Sigel, "The Modern Rabbi," in CCAR Yearbook: Ninety-First Annual Convention, ed. Elliot L. Stevens, vol. 90 (New York: Central Conference of American Rabbis, 1981), 119-20.

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the American Jewish community matures." Contemporary rabbis "face an opportunity both challenging and heartening."[47] Another Reform rabbi, Morris Lieberman, suggested in 1969 that the loss of religious authority had actually liberated the rabbi.

> He possesses almost unlimited privileges of expression, interpretation and experimentation. As a congregational rabbi, he is exempt from hierarchical restriction and is responsible only to his conscience and to his membership. In these freedoms he stands at the most forward point of the thrust into the future of the Jewish religious spirit.[48]

Lieberman takes his argument further: the complete divestiture of the rabbi's ecclesiastic function and authoritative posture would actually restore him to his "classic" position as a teacher. By this argument, the contemporary American version of rabbinic vocation is truer to its essence than any of the historically attested models. In 1987, Conservative rabbi David Lieber contended that the rabbis of today are still among "the animating spirits of the Jewish community and a principal source of its self-renewal."[49]

[47] Bamberger, 497.

[48] Morris Lieberman, "The Role and Functions of the Modern Rabbi," in CCAR Yearbook: Eightieth Annual Convention, ed. Sidney L. Regner, vol. 79 (New York: Central Conference of American Rabbis, 1970), 211.

[49] David Lieber, "What Training for Rabbis?" Judaism: A Quarterly Journal 36 (1987): 229.

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Yet such views are distinctly in the minority. A survey of the contemporary literature of the Reform and Conservative rabbinates reveals a profound sense of unease, malaise, and disappointment. In a presentation to the 1984 convention of Conservative rabbis, Dr. Samuel Klagsbrun, who teaches psychiatry at Columbia Medical School, identified the source of unhappiness in the "ambivalent" and even "disrespectful" attitude toward rabbis on the part of their own communities. This attitude, he argued, had now been internalized to a dangerous degree by the rabbis themselves.[50] The devaluation of rabbinical status had led to an interpersonal dynamic in which the rabbi was merely the employee of the congregation, with job specifications that were increasingly vague, standards of evaluation that were increasingly arbitrary, and tenure so precarious that rabbis now routinely engaged attorneys to negotiate contract, salary, and severance.

Of course this last factor of contemporary rabbinical life is hardly new. As aforenoted, ever since the professionalization of the rabbinate in the Middle Ages, rabbis have been financially dependent upon those over whom they claim religious authority. As Daniel Merritt has written, that situation still obtains, except that the rabbi's position is weaker: authority has been replaced by

[50] See Howard Singer, "Rabbis and Their Discontents," Commentary, May 1985, 56.

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"counsel in certain areas."

> The rabbi may be sought after for guidance, for leadership or for counsel in certain areas; but his freedom to function in this respect is frequently colored by the consideration that the very people to whom he must relate as leader have the power to hire or fire him, to raise or lower his salary, and in general to determine the conditions under which he will live.[51]

Of still greater concern, particularly among Reform rabbis, is their diminished role even within their own communities and congregations. Writing in 1955, Dudley Weinberg expressed the fear that the Reform rabbi was becoming "a kind of ecclesiastic clerk . . . ruling majestically and euphoniously over a domain whose principle provinces lie in the catering establishment, the hotel ballroom, the country club and the beth olam [cemetery]."[52] In an article published in the CCAR Journal in 1970, Eugene Borowitz, perhaps the leading contemporary theologian of the Reform Movement, suggested that the Reform rabbinate's most painful problem was the distance between the rabbi's and the congregation's religious conviction.

> The overwhelming majority of members in the congregation had only the most peripheral interest in Judaism. No amount of formal respect for the rabbi's role could make up for the layman's fundamental unconcern with the Judaism the rabbi

[51] Daniel J. Merritt, "The Rabbinate and the Jewish Community Structure: A Response," Conservative Judaism 23 (Spring 1969): 66.

[52] Dudley Weinberg, "The Problem of Rabbinic Authority," in CCAR Yearbook: Sixty-Sixth Annual Convention, ed. Sidney L. Regner, vol. 65 (New York: Central Conference of American Rabbis, 1955): 145.

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> taught. . . . From time to time the realization of the abyss that separated [the rabbis] from their people drove them to deep despair.[53]

In 1972, sociologist Theodore Lenn published the results of a research study of the Reform rabbinate commissioned by the Central Conference of American Rabbis.[54] The objective of the study was articulated as a question: "To the extent that any malaise exists in American Reform Judaism, how might it be identified and assessed by a study of the attitudes and behaviors of today's American Reform rabbinate?"[55] The study included samples of opinions gathered from rabbis, congregants, rabbinical students, pre-college youth, and rabbis' spouses. Questionnaires were sent to 942 Reform rabbis, of whom two-thirds responded, 80 percent of whom were full-time congregational rabbis. The demographic data from the study indicate the extent to which the Reform rabbinate had been separated from Europe and from Orthodoxy: within two generations of the mass immigration era, 83 percent of American Reform rabbis were born in the United States; 33 percent came from Orthodox backgrounds, but that number had dwindled to 9 percent in the last five years before the study was published; and 25 percent of the

[53] Eugene B. Borowitz, "Restructuring the Rabbinate: An Open Letter to Dr. Theodore I. Lenn," CCAR Journal 17 (Summer 1970): 61.

[54] Theodore I. Lenn et al., Rabbi and Synagogue in Reform Judaism (New York: Central Conference of American Rabbis, 1972).

[55] Lenn et al., 4.

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rabbis came from "comparatively uninvolved Jewish backgrounds."

Despite the anticipation of changing rabbinical identity that these data portend, neither Lenn nor the Reform Movement was prepared for the profile that emerged. Its most prominent feature was the disparity between expectations and performance, between function and self-fulfillment.[56] For instance, less than one-third of the rabbis looked upon presiding over ritual and worship as a "most satisfying" component of their vocation, yet 78 percent felt this was expected of them and 70 percent felt that they should comply. Only 6 percent thought a rabbi should perform administrative duties, but 38 percent reported that they performed them.[57] Thirty percent complained that their rabbinical training did not prepare them for dealing with "the practical aspects of a congregation," but 40 percent complained that such duties should not be regarded as rabbinical. Perhaps the most startling finding of the Lenn study was that, while over 80

[56] Donald P. Smith, in Clergy in the Cross Fire: Coping with Role Conflicts in the Ministry (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1973), discusses similar issues of role conflict for ministers.

[57] Note the similar finding of a 1970 survey commissioned by the Episcopal Church, asking parish priests to rank their activities in terms of importance, time spent, and personal enjoyment. Of ten items listed, administration was ranked least important and least enjoyable, but was ranked first in terms of percentage of time devoted to it. See Smith, 47-51.

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percent of the rabbis described themselves as "fully satisfied" or at least "somewhat satisfied" with their careers, only 53 percent thought they would choose the rabbinate again if they had the chance.

Among other data yielded by the Lenn study was a widening spectrum of theological orientation. While nearly half of the rabbis professed "belief in God and in Judaism," others preferred such terms as theist; traditionalist; existentialist; polydox; theological humanist; agnostic; even atheist. While 13 percent of the rabbis identified as agnostic, 44 percent of the Reform seminarians so specified, and only 4 percent of seminarians assented to believe in God "in the more or less traditional Judaic sense." Less than half of the seminarians intended to enter the congregational rabbinate; 37 percent planned to teach or pursue graduate studies at secular institutions.

It is difficult to quarrel with the conclusions drawn from the Lenn study by Reform rabbi Daniel Polish:

> The rabbinate as it exists today seems to be suffering from a disquiet of spirit. In large part, this disquiet has its roots in the unclarity about the function of the rabbi. The rabbinate seems to be a profession in search of definition. Earlier roles have been found to be no longer appropriate.[58]

[58] Daniel F. Polish, "The Modern Rabbi," in CCAR Yearbook: Ninety-First Annual Convention, ed. Elliot L. Stevens, vol. 90 (New York: Central Conference of American Rabbis, 1981), 143.

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This is not to say that a distinctive rabbinical role had not emerged in contemporary Jewish life, but that the respective expectations of congregation and rabbi were not perceived as congruent. While rabbis were still trained in the traditional sources of religious authority, they could no longer appeal to them. They now had to market their message to a constituency that behaved more and more like consumers. Likewise, the synagogue had to compete with other institutions in the community for time, attention, and financial support. Even those who affiliated brought an increasingly pragmatic approach to the synagogue, insisting that its programs and services satisfy the individual needs of their families before seeking the greater welfare of American or world Jewry. The result of these changes was a growing dissonance between the rabbis' perceived vocation and their actual role. Their ordination described them as Rabbis in Israel, but their duties confined them to one synagogue or other institutional setting. Their training cultivated the self-image of scholar and teacher, but they were judged most often in terms of their pulpit success, pastoral skills, and public persona. Often they were also expected to assume duties for which they had neither preparation nor inclination: religious school administration, personnel supervision, budgetary allocations, psychological counseling, group facilitation. Even those rabbis who managed to succeed often found

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themselves improvising in areas where they had no special knowledge. It is no wonder that many of them experienced deep frustration in their work, and that many seminarians were ambivalent about their future in the rabbinate.[59]

In 1985, thirteen years after the Lenn Report appeared, another study of the contemporary rabbinate sent new shock waves through the American Jewish community. In his article, "Role-Related Stress in the Rabbinate: A Report on a Nationwide Study of Conservative and Reform Rabbis,"[60] Leslie R. Freedman, a Conservative rabbi and clinical psychologist, summarized the results of a survey conducted in 1982. The research population was comprised of over two thousand Conservative and Reform rabbis, 86 percent of whom served congregations, and two-thirds of whom returned written questionnaires. The questionnaire focused on three areas: the rabbis' thoughts and feelings about their work, about themselves, and about their families. Only 2 percent of the respondents said that their work was "not stressful";

[59] The Lenn study did occasion some methodological criticism. Robert L. Katz, Professor of Human Relations at Hebrew Union College, argued that Lenn's questions were "poorly designed to elicit feedback in any depth or detail. . . . The Lenn Report again and again raises questions which are more psychological than structural. We are apprised of unmet dependency needs and we get feedback on the prevalence of a fuzzy kind of frustration." See Robert L. Katz, "Afterthoughts on Lenn: II. Seminary Malaise," CCAR Journal 20 (Winter 1973): 9-13.

[60] Leslie R. Freedman, "Role-Related Stress in the Rabbinate: A Report on a Nationwide Study of Conservative and Reform Rabbis," Journal of Reform Judaism 32 (Winter 1985): 1-8.

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21 percent answered "a little stressful"; 50 percent reported rabbinical work to be "moderately stressful"; and 27 percent "very stressful." Freedman found these percentages to be alarming: the data show that the average rabbi has a level of distress statistically greater than two-thirds of the population of the United States. Freedman compared these results to data gathered in the aftermath of the nuclear reactor accident at Three Mile Island. There, the mean scale of males residing in a twenty-mile radius of the reactor during the month after the accident was 0.983; the comparable index for rabbis was 1.104. More alarming still, the level of distress at Three Mile Island was observed to drop sharply in the following months, while the data collected from the rabbis attest to their experience over the previous one-year period. Thus the sample of rabbis admitted to an experience of chronic psychological stress at a level higher than the peak distress felt by those who feared exposure to nuclear radiation!

In reference to the term "stress," Freedman addresses the "psychological component of the stress syndrome: low self-esteem, helplessness, hopelessness, anxiety, and sadness." He compares the overall experience to the thought, "I'm caught in a situation and I don't know how to get out of it," for which he suggests the term "demoralization." His conclusion invites comparison to the results of the Lenn Report.

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> The evidence shows that rabbis are prone to excessive ideal dissonance and concomitant lowered self-esteem. This pitfall is virtually built into a role in which one is expected to exemplify moral perfection, a state one inevitably fails to achieve. It is compounded, however, by a professional socialization process that often fails to offer a realistic vision of what a contemporary American rabbi might be.[61]

A year after Freedman's study appeared, Daniel Jeremy Silver of Cleveland, a prominent Reform rabbi and scholar, published a paper in the Journal of Reform Judaism whose title described the dimensions of the rabbinate's identity crisis: "The Core of Our Calling: Who is a Rabbi? What is a Rabbi? Why is a Rabbi?"[62] In this essay, Silver examines the contemporary rabbinate in the context of its encounter with Jewish life in the United States. He begins his discussion by acknowledging the central finding of the Lenn Report: "Conventional assumptions about our role do not match up with the reality of what we do." While preparing his study, he interviewed congregants (not his own). When they were asked to define the word "rabbi," they responded: teacher, preacher, community leader, Jewish clergyperson. But when they were asked to describe their actual contacts with their rabbi, the teacher, preacher, and community leader disappeared: "He officiated at my daughter's wedding. . . . He visited my son in the hospital. . . . She

[61] See Freedman, 5-6.

[62] Daniel Jeremy Silver, "The Core of Our Calling: Who is a Rabbi? What is a Rabbi? Why is a Rabbi?" Journal of Reform Judaism 33 (Spring 1986): 1-14.

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spoke at Dad's funeral. . . . We worked together on the annual fundraiser." American Jews see their rabbis as clergy. In contrast, or perhaps in contradiction, rabbis describe themselves "romantically"

> as activist champions of a prophetic ethic, as key figures in the drama of Jewish survival, as respected interpreters of Torah, and as selfless servants of the Jewish people, if not humankind.[63]

Silver's argument is that the self-image of the contemporary rabbi is shaped by an inherited status that, for the most part, no longer exists.

The persistence of an inflated self-image is conditioned not only by memories of the prestige of the Old World rabbis but by the unexpected status conferred upon them when they first arrived in America. As a clergyman, the first generation American rabbi played a pivotal role in the process of Americanization. His university education made him a valued guide to the mysteries of American culture. He was accorded status because he conferred it as the interpreter of the old faith to the New World and as the interpreter of the New World to a population of recent immigrants and their children. The first half of the twentieth century, Silver contends, was the Golden Age of the American rabbinate, when the first generation of English-speaking rabbis cultivated their pulpit skills and galvanized rapt audiences of Jews and non-Jews. In those

[63] Silver, 2.

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years, it was widely believed that an expanded synagogue could function as the hub of Jewish communal life in America. At the time there were few other established institutions to compete with it. The rabbis, accordingly, enjoyed an impressive degree of ascribed respect.

By the 1950s, however, conditions had changed: the second and third generations of American Jews no longer needed the rabbi to guide them into American culture. Radio and then television reduced the importance of public speaking. Local Jewish communities began to develop central planning and fundraising agencies that did not require rabbinical leadership. Many congregants now attained to levels of education that exceeded the rabbi's. The Jewish population became increasingly suburban, and commuting patterns, school arrangements, and extracurricular activities placed new limits on the synagogue. As its power in the Jewish community was reduced, its place in the private lives of its members was also diminished.

The rabbi's sphere of influence was likewise curtailed. With few exceptions, contemporary rabbis are no longer seen as community leaders but as clergypeople, religious functionaries trained and hired to perform a specific set of services. They are expected to conduct worship and ritual ceremonies, organize the religious school, prepare students for Bar/Bat Mitzvah and Confirmation, visit the sick, comfort the bereaved, give an occasional sermon, promote

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membership, raise funds, attend meetings of the local clergy association, and so on. This is what a congregational rabbi does today, and his or her congregants know it. As Silver points out, no contemporary congregation seriously lists "scholar" as its primary requirement for rabbinical appointment.

Yet rabbinical training and rabbinical self-image continue to be premised upon the paradigm of rabbinical scholar, spiritual leader, and religious authority. Rabbis still insist on calling their offices "studies," even though their studies are used more for counseling, conducting meetings, teaching, and administrating. In recent years the advent of advanced programs in Jewish Studies at secular universities has produced a new generation of Judaica scholars whose academic sophistication surpasses the rabbi's seminary training. In contemporary Jewish life, rabbis are no longer assumed to be the most learned. The Association for Jewish Studies, comprised primarily of full-time academics, now lays claim to that distinction.

> Rabbis think of themselves as members of a learned profession, but in real life rabbis are more like high school teachers than university faculty. . . . The learning rabbis acquire and dispense has more to do with the heart and spirit than with pure scholarship or original thought. . . . This generation of rabbis must live with the perception that they are seen as teachers rather than scholars, as well-intentioned rather than expert.[64]

[64] Silver, 2-3.

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While the contemporary rabbinate is occupied with issues of self-image, what of the congregation? What does the Jewish laity need from its rabbis today? As Reform rabbi Peter Rubinstein has written, the ethnic dimension of Judaism is rapidly receding.[65] As the dominant Jewish cultural expression, European traditions have dissipated. Traditional Jewish foods are now remembered with nostalgia, but the recipes are forgotten. The flavor of distinctly Jewish neighborhoods and communities has all but disappeared. In their place, Rubinstein suggests, there is a new hunger for faith, covenant, and belief. Rabbis now need to focus upon their own spiritual development. Their teaching needs to concentrate less upon broad social issues and more upon helping the individual to "discover personal religious significance. . . . More Jews, and in greater frequency, will want their rabbi to explain the meaning of life's vicissitudes."[66]

The view that the congregation's needs are changing, and that the rabbinical role must adjust accordingly, has been advanced by a growing number of contemporary rabbis. In the 1975 proceedings of the Central Conference of American Rabbis, one rabbi acknowledges the congregation's

[65] Peter J. Rubinstein, "The Next Century," in Tanu Rabbanan: Our Rabbis Taught. Essays on the Occasion of the Centennial of the Central Conference of American Rabbis, ed. Joseph B. Glaser, vol. 99, pt. 2 (New York: Central Conference of American Rabbis, 1990), 136.

[66] Rubinstein, 142.

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feeling of alienation.

> The fatal paradox is: the more indispensable I grow, the more irrelevant I become, the more active I become, the more passive the congregation, the more ubiquitous I am, the greater the Jewish distance between myself and the congregation.[67]

Another rabbi describes the archetypal congregant of today:

> Behind the mask of autonomy and of self-sufficiency, and his detachedness into a terrifying anonymity, lies the longing for belonging, the craving for community and purpose. What else does it mean when there is only one question that every one of us has been asked . . . "Say, Rabbi, I bet you don't remember my name"?[68]

Seeking to develop a new model for the American rabbi, Rami Shapiro, ordained by Hebrew Union College, has called for a radical break from traditional premises.[69] He contends that the majority of Jews in America today no longer look to their rabbis for ethical guidance. The rabbi's traditional expertise--the interpretation of sacred texts--is of little interest to them. The rabbi is left with the awkward task of perpetuating an approach to religion that lays no claim to the sensibility of the modern Jew.

[67] Cited by Harold Schulweis in "Changing Models of the Synagogue and the Rabbi's Role," in CCAR Yearbook: Eighty-Sixth Annual Convention, ed. Elliot L. Stevens, vol. 85 (New York: Central Conference of American Rabbis, 1976), 138-39.

[68] Schulweis, 140.

[69] Rami M. Shapiro, "Standing Naked, Breaking Heads: A New Model for the American Rabbi," Reconstructionist 56 (Summer 1991): 7-15.

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> Rabbis should not be in the business of preserving the past - they should leave that to museum curators. Rabbis should be in the business of awakening people to God. . . . The concern of the rabbi should not be tradition, but truth; not in the past, but the eternal present; not the life of the pious, but the lives of the people who come to the rabbi for guidance.[70]

In Shapiro's view, rabbis must learn to refrain from the posture of authority or judgment. They must cultivate empathy, the ability to see the world through the eyes of others, without passing judgment. They must learn the skills and technologies of self-discovery and spiritual growth. Rabbinical training should adopt methods of meditation, guided imagery, deep relaxation, even hypnosis.

> We are entering a time of great upheaval in Jewish spiritual life. The majority of our people have no interest in the law and are unaware of the lore. They desperately desire insights that will give meaning to their lives and do not know that their own culture is rich with just such wisdom. They lie on the shore of a fresh and pure spring they cannot see, dying of thirst because no one has led them to it. This is a scandal.[71]

One of the most influential Reform rabbis in the United States today, Samuel Karff of Houston, Texas, has sounded a similar if more measured call for new priorities of spiritual leadership. He objects to definitions of the rabbinate that stress the purely academic while

[70] Shapiro, 7-8.

[71] Shapiro, 10-11.

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subordinating the role of "counselor and comforter."[72] On the contrary, Karff argues, the rabbi's function is "to help heal the breach between the person and a sense of life's meaning." Because rabbis can still rely upon symbols and associations more enduring than psychiatrists can summon, they have a special power to alleviate guilt and mediate self-acceptance. Because they are surrogates of a tradition that takes moral judgment seriously, they are uniquely equipped to invoke that same tradition's concept of forgiveness and the possibility of repentance (teshuvah). Karff maintains that the counseling role is the rabbi's "teachable moment," comparing it to the function of aggadah, rabbinic lore, in the discourse of Judaism:

> Our counseling interventions share with the secular therapist the requirement of good listening and support, but we bring to our counseling . . . the aggadah of a relationship binding us to a God who is our Creator, the source of our worth . . . opening new opportunities, and rescuing us from despair. The more we can comfortably come to terms with that story, the more we can bring what is distinctively ours to our role as counselor and comforter to the household of Israel.[73]

If Shapiro envisions the contemporary rabbi as a spiritual adept, and Karff as a religious counselor, Robert Katz, Professor of Human Relations at Hebrew Union College,

[72] Samuel E. Karff, "The Rabbinic Vocation: The Rabbi as Counselor and Comforter," Kallah of the Pacific Association of Reform Rabbis (Houston: Congregation Beth Israel, 1984), 1-7.

[73] Karff, 7.

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has called for a still more fundamental shift of paradigm: from the rabbi as leader to the rabbi as fellow-seeker.[74] Katz concedes that the traditional model of the rabbi, with its mantle of authority and exemplary distinction, is not easily surrendered. Much is invested, historically and psychologically, in cultivating a style that focuses on the rabbi as the center of attention and spiritual fountainhead. But Katz argues that this model is no longer functional: the power relations between rabbi and laity have changed. Instead of struggling for power in the congregation, the rabbi must learn how to be less contentious, less guarded, more open and trusting. The psychology of power, Katz asserts, equates dominance with strength and deference with weakness, often accompanied by resentment, conscious or unconscious. The new rabbi must transcend this syndrome.

> A change of intention and goal is needed. The rabbi can view himself a fellow-seeker with his laymen, an informed, gifted, and dedicated resource, to be sure, but not a leader preoccupied with power relations.[75]

So long as rabbis see themselves as vessels of authoritative tradition and keepers of the Torah, Katz argues, the laity will abdicate their own responsibility and leave the rabbi to tend to religious values. Unless the rabbi aspires to be a custodian of revered relics, he or she must be prepared to

[74] Robert L. Katz, "Changing Self-Concepts of Reform Rabbis, 1976," CCAR Journal 23 (Summer 1976): 51-56.

[75] Katz, "Changing Self-Concepts," 54.

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relinquish the obsolete conception of rabbinical elevation. Katz summarizes the outstanding features of the "emerging rabbinate": less competition with peers; less social distance from the congregation; less concern with authority; more readiness for "joint search and exploration"; more self-disclosure; and more tolerance for ambiguity.

Katz's conception of the "emerging rabbinate" is based on a sociological perspective first formulated in a paper he published prior to the Lenn Report, "The Future of the Rabbinate: Ascribed vs. Achieved Leadership."[76] Here Katz addresses the plight of the contemporary rabbi in a society which is rational, technological, experimental, and non-parochial. How relevant now are rabbis to a culture impatient with the past when their basic claim to distinction lies in age-old Jewish learning? Within the Jewish community itself, how does the rabbi fit into the welter of competing institutions and organizations or the new class of Jewish academics, communal professionals, family service caseworkers, and fundraising executives? Who needs the rabbi now that Jewish and American identifications are so compatible?

What rabbis still seem to prefer, Katz maintains, is a return to the system in which the incumbent of a position of office has a fixed status. Such "ascribed" status is

[76] Robert L. Katz, "The Future of the Rabbinate--Ascribed vs. Achieved Leadership: Perspectives from Sociology," CCAR Journal 17 (April 1970): 49-65.

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established and permanent, not contingent. It does not depend upon the continuous demonstration of the incumbent's right to authority. Once designated, the incumbent's powers are assured by the traditional reverence for position. It is the charisma of office, not personality, that guarantees authority. Katz contrasts this form of leadership with "achieved" status, i.e., the influence one earns by demonstration of capacity, dynamism, and achievement. "Achieved" status depends upon what is accomplished today, not what is venerated from the inherited past.

For some rabbis, Katz acknowledges, the transition from "ascribed" to "achieved" status is unwelcome. Having to perform in a climate of insecurity, a familiar prospect to other professionals, is apparently a daunting one to rabbis. The creative and even liberating aspects of such a role do not seem to compensate for an erosion of stature. Nonetheless, Katz contends, the ground beneath the rabbi's feet has shifted. While rabbis continue to nurse obsolete images of authority, their claim to it is no longer plausible. Their rabbinical training, essentially textual and historical, does not automatically qualify them as experts in modern life or judges of what is authentic. Nor do their studies confer competence in areas of human relations that would more credibly follow from clinical study and case experience with people and institutions.

> The deference which accrued to the rabbi in the past is no longer accorded him because his

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> accreditation is now more symbolic than real. . . . With an increasing sense of frustration, he continues to use traditional thought patterns and often is unable to shake himself loose from an older type of feeling system in which he is trapped. He needs to break out of the pattern of older role expectations and think realistically, confronting the situation for what it is and determining what it is that is possible for him to accomplish.[77]

Whether or not the "emerging rabbinate" described by Katz should come to pass, there can be little doubt that Jewish religious leadership today is at a historic turning. The Orthodox rabbi, although buffeted by the prevailing winds of secular society, still clings to the inherited authority of received tradition. His rabbinical training, while modified by modern trends, still assumes that the Talmud and its traditional commentaries are transcendent in origin and significance. Conservative, Reform, and Reconstructionist rabbis, however, answerable to a much larger and more secular Jewish constituency, can no longer claim such authority. Their status, as Katz correctly maintains, has become more symbolic than real. Their training, still governed by the Wissenschaft model of dispassionate scholarship, does not focus on the functional aspects of their current roles in the congregation, nor does it measure up to the more rigorous standards of advanced Jewish studies in the secular academy. Modern rabbis find

[77] Katz, "Future," 60.

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themselves at a crossroads of definition, identity, and purpose.

Issues of continuity and discontinuity naturally arise when considering the nature of the rabbinical office in the modern world. Does the role of the modern rabbi reflect a fundamental shift from that of the rabbi's predecessors, or is it a role based on the same values and principles as those which guided the earliest rabbis? Does the literal understanding of rabbi as "my teacher" still guide the rabbinate?

From earliest times, the role of the Jewish religious leader has demanded responses to changing circumstances and particular needs of the community. In the Babylonian Talmud, a story is told of the first century C.E. rabbi, Yohanan ben Zakkai, who, foreseeing the destruction of the Temple in Jerusalem, feigned his death and escaped from Jerusalem in a coffin carried by his disciples.[78] He ultimately settled in Yavneh, where he established a rabbinic academy centered on the study of Scripture and its legal interpretation. This approach to religion did not depend upon the Temple or the sacrificial cult in Jerusalem; it survived the destruction of both. The story of Rabbi Yohanan ben Zakkai exemplifies the response to new circumstances and the continual need for adaptation which

[78] Babylonian Talmud Gittin 56a-56b.

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has characterized the rabbinate throughout its history.[79]

In the course of many centuries, the rabbi has assumed other functions: healer, teacher, judge, scholar, ritual officiant, preacher, and community leader. The modern rabbi has assumed different aspects of these historic roles. In addition, the modern rabbi, as contemporary Jewish sociologist Nathan Glazer has pointed out, has assumed new functions as well: as pastor, religious educator, ecumenical representative, life-cycle officiant, and administrator.[80] Ultimately, however, as Reform rabbi Peter Knobel has contended, the rabbi's essential role--now as in the past--is to understand Torah and bring it to life. The rabbi's task, Knobel writes, is "essentially theological. It is the translation of experience and deeds into moments of transcendence."[81] The role of the modern rabbi is grounded historically in the paradigm of rabbi as teacher and interpreter of Torah for his or her particular time. This role can be expressed in many ways, as Katz, Shapiro, and Karff have articulated in their respective models of co-seeker, spiritual adept, and religious counselor. However,

[79] For a useful description of Yohanan ben Zakkai's life and its meaning for Judaism and the rabbinate, see Jacob Neusner, First Century Judaism in Crisis: Yohanan ben Zakkai and the Renaissance of Torah (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1975).

[80] Glazer, 138.

[81] Peter S. Knobel, "Rabbi, An Interpreter of Religious Experience," in Stevens, 48.

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the goal remains unchanged--to teach, to perpetuate Judaism, and to transform the ordinary into the sacred.

Historian Arthur Hertzberg, writing in 1966, posed the question of whether the rabbinate could survive in its present form and with its present functions.[82] He compares the current era to the period of late antiquity when the biblically prescribed priesthood lost religious authority to the nascent class of Palestinian rabbis. The ancient rabbis arose as popular leaders because they represented a new system of religious values more relevant to the contemporary realities of Jewish life. When the rabbis first emerged during the last years of the Second Temple in Jerusalem, the priesthood still existed. It continued to perform ritual functions, but these activities had already become largely vestigial. The cultic religion was no longer the people's religion. The same may be true, Hertzberg suggests, of the contemporary rabbinate.

> The rabbinate today is essentially neither judge nor leader. It is the agent of a remaining powerful and pervasive emotion about Jewish togetherness. The purely religious function of the rabbi has been becoming ever more vestigial for many decades. Indeed, it is as far now from the center of Jewish mass consciousness as were the ritual functions of the priesthood of old. The rabbi's more contemporary role as leader of the Jews in a hostile world, or as moral guide to their political action, is constantly diminishing.

[82] Arthur Hertzberg, "The Changing American Rabbinate," Midstream 12, no. 1 (1966): 16-29.

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> He has become peripheral to the major social struggles of this age.[83]

If the rabbinate, as presently defined, is increasingly peripheral to Jewish life, can it transform itself to meet the new challenges of Jewish leadership? Can it develop a posture more relevant to the spiritual climate of secular society? The voluntary character of religious affiliation in Western society, the breakdown of the traditional communal structure and base of authority, radical changes in social and cultural patterns--all have fundamentally altered the nature of the Jewish community and its institutions. The question, to be addressed in the next chapter, is whether the existing models of rabbinical training have acknowledged this transformation.

[83] Hertzberg, 29.

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CHAPTER 2

Tradition or Renewal?
An Assessment of a Modern Rabbinical School Curriculum

In 1968 the noted Jewish political scientist Charles Liebman wrote an extensive essay entitled, "The Training of American Rabbis."[1] The article occasioned much debate in Jewish institutions of higher learning. Liebman praises Christian seminaries for their "self-evaluation and criticism" and for their willingness to undertake "renewal and change." In contrast, he argues, Jewish seminaries have been characterized by "tradition and continuity." Only in recent years have Jewish seminaries actively engaged in a process of self-evaluation and curricular review.

Rabbinical curricula, like all curricula, articulate educational values and advocate educational outcomes in a structured program. Elliot Eisner discusses the range of meanings associated with curriculum as "all of the experiences . . . [a student] has under the aegis of the school" and divides these experiences into two categories: (1) a written course of study identifying the central subjects, themes, and goals that are part of the instructional program and (2) all the other experiences which a student learns from both in and outside of the

[1] Charles S. Liebman, "The Training of American Rabbis," in American Jewish Yearbook, eds. Morris Fine and Milton Himmelfarb, vol. 69 (New York: American Jewish Committee, 1968), 3-112.

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classroom.[2]

It should be noted that every curriculum is more than a course of studies or an instructional program. It implies an educational philosophy with respect to the arrangement of subject matter, the structure of knowledge, and the nature of meaning. Curricula are also affected by socio-political context and by various restraints on institutional decision-making.

In institutions of higher learning, curricula have traditionally been developed out of principles that identify educational value with particular subject matters or disciplines. Becoming educated means learning how to use the ideas within these disciplines. This approach has been described as academic rationalism: to foster the intellectual growth of the student in those subjects most worthy of study, emphasizing the encounter with classical texts and primary sources. Ideally this orientation aims not only at content but at process: the ability to infer, to speculate, to visualize, and the like; to cultivate the faculties and not merely the facts.

Less central to the curriculum of higher learning, but crucial to theological education, is the primacy of personal meaning. This curriculum orientation emerges out of the

[2] Elliot W. Eisner, "Some Concepts, Distinctions, and Definitions," chap. 2 of The Educational Imagination: On the Design and Evaluation of School Programs, 3rd ed. (New York: Macmillan Publishing, 1994), 26-27.

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sympathetic interaction of teachers and students and emphasizes the importance of authentic personal experience. The educator is perceived as a gardener, not a sculptor; the curriculum is a gateway to the destination of the learner's inner life.[3]

While each of the major contemporary American Jewish rabbinical seminaries--Yeshiva University, the Reconstructionist Rabbinical College, the Jewish Theological Seminary, and Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion--has reevaluated its rabbinical curriculum within the last decade, the focus of this chapter is an examination of the current curriculum of the Reform rabbinical seminary (HUC-JIR). However, to place HUC's curriculum in context, I will begin by surveying the major curricular changes introduced by the other seminaries during the same period.

The Jewish Theological Seminary of America (JTS), founded by precursors of the Conservative Movement in 1886, conducted a curricular review in the mid-1980s and introduced its recommendations during the 1989-90 academic year. Rabbi Gordon Tucker, Dean of the Rabbinical School at JTS at the time, commented on the changes in the curriculum:

> The new Rabbinical School Curriculum stands in the long seminary tradition of academic rigor and devotion to Jewish scholarship as a religious

[3] The foregoing discussion of curriculum orientation relies upon Eisner's, "The Three Curricula That All Schools Teach," chap. 4 of The Educational Imagination, 87-107. I am indebted to Prof. Michael Zeldin for bringing this source to my attention.

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> value. It differs from previous curricula in that it will overtly address the goal of transforming the bright and committed men and women who come to us into rabbis. We believe this transformation process requires great scholarly achievement but also serious attention to inner religious growth, and the development of the ability to teach, inspire and transform the lives of others.[4]

These objectives were translated into the curriculum with innovations in the area of field education, the introduction of a special seminar, and the requirement that students pick a field of concentration. The Rabbinical School Seminar, required during the first three years of rabbinical school, seeks to integrate the student's growth academically, religiously, and professionally. In the final two years of rabbinical school, students are required to participate in several field work experiences, such as congregations, hospitals, communal service agencies, schools, Hillel foundations, etc. In the last year of rabbinical school, students are required to work fifteen hours a week in a field setting.[5]

Although the current JTS curriculum lays more stress on the practical training of the rabbi, the classical disciplines remain at the core of the curriculum. From its inception, the JTS curriculum was based on a model of the rabbi whose authority relied on the mastery of ancient

[4] "Jewish Theological Seminary Changes Rabbinical School Curriculum," press release, JTS, n.d.

[5] Academic Bulletin ([New York]: Jewish Theological Seminary of America, 1993-94/5754), 39-54.

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texts. The 1886 curriculum centered on the study of Bible, supplemented by Talmud, Jewish history and education. Under the leadership of Solomon Schechter, who assumed the presidency of JTS in 1902, the focus of the curriculum shifted from Bible to Talmud (Babylonian and Palestinian). A requirement regarding personal observance was introduced and remains in place today: "All students in the Rabbinical School must be committed to, and living, an observant Jewish life."[6] Schechter was deeply devoted to maintaining the seminary's commitment to Wissenschaft and to the role of the rabbi as a scholar of Jewish literature. However, in his inaugural address of 1902, he spoke also of JTS as "a training school for the Jewish ministry."[7] Schechter's definition of this training does not refer to practical skills but to the range of Jewish knowledge, e.g., ethics, folklore, and mysticism. Although his commitment was to the understanding and exposition of classical Judaism, Schechter was also aware that not everything a rabbi needs can be taught. He asserted that the rabbi also needed to be educated through the experiences provided by life,

> those occasions in our earthly career which by reason of intense joys or sorrow or the tender sympathy which they evoke, crowd years into moments, and form, so to speak, portions of life

[6] Academic Bulletin ([New York]: Jewish Theological Seminary of America, 1994-95/5755), 43.

[7] Solomon Schechter, "The Charter of the Seminary," in Seminary Addresses and Other Papers (Cincinnati: Ark Publishing, 1915), 19.

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in condensation.[8]

Despite his obvious awareness of the need to prepare rabbis for their pastoral tasks, Schechter did not include education in these areas in his curriculum. The rabbi was trained as scholar, teacher and preacher, and the curriculum prepared students for that model of leadership. Although beginning in the 1930s more attention was given to the practical dimensions of the rabbinical role, the commitment to classical Jewish learning remained central to the course of study.[9] At JTS, the Schechter model of rabbinical education predominates to the present day.

The JTS curricular changes of the past decade, especially the addition of the Rabbinical School Seminar and supervised fieldwork, reflect the changing role of the contemporary rabbi. However, the impact of these changes must be viewed in the context of a curriculum where the vast majority of the program is still devoted to Jewish texts. In the first three years, all courses except for the Seminar are in classical Jewish subjects. In the fourth year, fifteen units of classical Jewish learning are required each semester. It is not until the fifth year that the curriculum is equally divided between the academic and professional aspects of the program. JTS professor Neil

[8] Schechter, 28.

[9] For a more detailed discussion of the development of the JTS curriculum, see David M. Ackerman, "A Not Too Distant Mirror," Conservative Judaism 44 (Summer 1992): 47-61.

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Gillman has pointed out that the courses in rabbinical professional skills are "relegated to the periphery and to the final years of study."[10] This reflects a commitment to the notion that rabbis--whatever their pastoral skills or tasks--merit their title only by virtue of their mastery of classical Jewish learning.

Yeshiva University's Rabbi Isaac Elhanan Theological Seminary (RIETS), founded in 1896, extended its course of study from three to four years beginning in the fall of 1984. Although its name designates it as a seminary, RIETS in fact defines itself as a yeshivah, where one seeks to master talmudic learning in contrast to the wider variety of subjects and professional skills taught at a modern seminary. A major component of the revised RIETS curriculum addresses contemporary halakhah: social and political issues, family law, medical ethics; practical halakhah related to ritual observance of the Sabbath and dietary laws; and current halakhic dilemmas discussed in weekly seminars with guest lecturers. Another new component is the Rabbinical and Teaching Apprenticeship Program that allows students pursuing ordination and the congregational rabbinate to gain experience working in a synagogue or

[10] Neil Gillman, "Inside or Outside? Emancipation and the Dilemmas of Conservative Judaism," Judaism 34 (Fall 1989): 415.

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school with a mentor during their fourth year.[11] These changes in the curriculum, facilitated by the addition of the fourth year, reflect an implicit recognition of the contemporary world in which the Orthodox rabbi serves. But they cannot be said to constitute a shift in paradigm in rabbinical training or in the role of the rabbi. The RIETS curriculum is still based on the yeshivah model, where the primary focus is the study of Talmud and the development of personal character based on the values of rabbinic Judaism. The model of the rabbi as scholar and authority remains preeminent.

The Reconstructionist Rabbinical College (RRC), founded in 1968, is the newest rabbinical seminary in the United States. Compared to the others, RRC lacks a well-established national movement or synagogue structure in which to place its rabbis. The school was established on the basis of the Reconstructionist philosophy of Mordecai Kaplan, one of the most influential twentieth century Jewish philosophers and teachers. Essentially, Reconstructionism sees Judaism as an evolving religious civilization and attempts to bridge the gap between historic traditions and the contemporary secular world by "reconstructing" Jewish religion. From its inception, the RRC required, in addition to the studies leading to rabbinical ordination, an advanced

[11] Rabbi Isaac Elchanan Theological Seminary ([New York]: Yeshiva Univ., n.d.), n.p.

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degree from another institution in a field of secular studies. The core of the RRC curriculum was the notion of Judaism as a civilization and its development through the ages, leading to the contemporary era where it continues to evolve. Hence, the course of study was focused around "civilizational years," and the student progressed from a study of "Biblical Civilization" in the first year to "Rabbinic Civilization" in the second, "Medieval" in the third, "Modern" in the fourth, and "Contemporary" in the fifth. The entire program was thus designed to both educate the student in and reinforce a Reconstructionist view of "Judaism as an evolving civilization."

In 1983, the RRC undertook an evaluation of its rabbinical course of study, introducing several changes: students are no longer required to earn an advanced degree from a secular institution prior to ordination; students must now take graduate courses in Religious Studies, (e.g., Islam, Christianity, Western Philosophy, etc.); several new Hebrew text courses are now required; and finally, students must now choose an area in which to concentrate their studies. In the new curriculum, Practical Rabbinics is required each semester, with attention given to the multiple roles and responsibilities incumbent upon the modern rabbi.[12] RRC views its curriculum as offering a "new

[12] Catalogue ([Philadelphia]: Reconstructionist Rabbinical College, 1990-93), 7-10, 18-50.

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approach to rabbinic education. . . . This approach understands rabbinical studies as necessarily combining aspects of academic study with a personal encounter with Judaism. . . ."[13] In its discussion of the program's goals, the RRC catalog is conscious of the need to make Jewish learning relevant to the issues of contemporary life. Mordecai Kaplan had already defined the purpose of the RRC:

> A rabbinic school should furnish its students with extensive and intensive knowledge of the Jewish heritage, of human nature and social conditions, and with the ability to synthesize situations with which they will have to deal as rabbis.[14]

The model of the RRC rabbi rejects the notion of the rabbi as an authority figure. Rather, as Rebecca T. Alpert (an RRC graduate and a member of the faculty) has claimed, the Reconstructionist rabbi is a guide who helps people to explore Jewish life for themselves and works as part of a community in shaping its future.[15]

The recent revisions of rabbinical curricula at JTS, RIETS, and RRC reflect the tension between the historical sina qua non of the rabbinate, viz., the mastery of rabbinic texts, and increasing demands for professional skills and the cultivation of spirituality. While textual learning remains at the core of these curricula, each of them

[13] Catalogue (RRC), 7.

[14] As cited in Rebecca T. Alpert, "Reconstructionist Rabbis," in Encyclopaedia Judaica Supplement (Jerusalem: Keter, 1985), 101.

[15] Alpert, 101.

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addresses the need to prepare rabbis who can respond to the growing secularity of American society.

In the fall of 1985, the President of Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion (HUC),[16] Alfred Gottschalk, appointed a Task Force on the Rabbinical Curriculum

> to undertake a thorough study of the rabbinic curriculum . . . in light of the many changes which have occurred over the years in our rabbinic school; in our student body (women students, changing religious orientation--Reform background, attitude toward ritual, etc.); the changes in our lay constituency, and in the nature of the emerging Reform Jewish community.[17]

The Task Force was chaired by the Vice President for Academic Affairs and included a faculty representative from each of the American campuses (New York, Cincinnati, and Los Angeles). It was instructed to consult with faculty, administration, alumni, students, lay members of Reform congregations, leaders of the Reform Movement, and curricular experts and to report back to the President with

> the goals and objectives of our rabbinic program, a curriculum (formal and informal) that will prepare rabbis who will serve our contemporary and future constituency with maximum effectiveness and personal fulfillment, and methods for implementing that curriculum. (TFR 2)

[16] Hebrew Union College (HUC) was established in 1875. In 1950 it merged with the Jewish Institute of Religion (JIR).

[17] Norman J. Cohen et al., "'Innovators of Torah': Preparing Tomorrow's Rabbis for Reform Judaism." Report of the Task Force on the Rabbinic Curriculum of the Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion, Cincinnati, Oct. 1988, 1. All future references to the Task Force Report are contained in the body of the text with the abbreviation TFR.

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Since its inception in 1875, HUC's curriculum was designed to provide rabbinical students with extensive Jewish knowledge. Isaac Mayer Wise, the founder of the College, saw the role of the rabbi as that of a teacher and scholar: "The American rabbi must be a classical and scientific scholar, must be a philosophical mind, and, of course, must possess a thorough knowledge of the Jewish literature. . . ."[18] The emphasis of Wise's curriculum was on Bible, rabbinic literature and Jewish history, and philosophy. In addition to Hebrew, knowledge of Semitic languages was required. Although Wise believed that rabbinical authority derived from learning, he was also keenly aware of the rabbi's pastoral role.

> This and nothing else is the sole object of this school, to prepare young people to be heaven's messengers to the House of Israel, to suffering, weeping humanity, to the weary wanderer at the wayside.[19]

Wise's goal was to prepare rabbis for the teaching of an undivided American Judaism. However, with the founding of JTS and RIETS, the emphasis of the HUC program was to become more focused on the preparation of rabbis for the Reform Movement. Under the leadership of the College's second president, Kaufmann Kohler, the focus on Reform

[18] Isaac Mayer Wise, "Reasons For The Union," The Israelite, 8 Sept. 1871, 8.

[19] Isaac Mayer Wise, "Opening Twenty-Third Year of the Hebrew Union College," in Proceedings of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations, 1891-1897, vol. 4 (Cincinnati: Executive Board, Union of American Hebrew Congregations, n.d.), 3808.

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served as a key rationale for major shifts in the curriculum. Talmud was only considered important as a historical source and for its ethical and moral teachings. Semitic languages were dropped. The study of modern Hebrew was also eliminated from the curriculum. Courses in liturgy and homiletics were added. A more integrated approach to the course of study was introduced:

> Each teacher, by showing the organic connections, the inner relations between his branch of study with the others, can single out the potencies, the spiritual, moral, and intellectual kernel beneath the shell . . . and show the higher motives that gave lasting value and zest to each specific study and movement.[20]

Although Jewish learning remained as the centerpiece of the curriculum, Kohler knew that it was critical for rabbis to have the ability to utilize their knowledge. "All the knowledge the future rabbi acquires must be subordinate to the higher task of practical communal service which he is expected to assume."[21] Kohler saw HUC as a theological institution, not as a modern yeshivah or as a university Semitics department.

While there were major shifts in the curriculum during Kohler's presidency, HUC did not undergo the thorough change he envisioned. Although he advocated training for the

[20] Kaufmann Kohler, "What a Jewish Institution of Learning Should Be," in Proceedings of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations, vol. 6 (Cincinnati: Executive Board, Union of American Hebrew Congregations, 1903), 4981.

[21] Kohler, 4994.

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practical duties of the rabbi, the course of study was still devoted largely to classical Jewish learning. The disparity between theory and practice was articulated by a letter from a dissatisfied student, written in 1907.

> I came to the Hebrew Union College to prepare for the American rabbinate and I found a curriculum that, to my mind, is but an incomplete reproduction, in miniature, of the course of study of the old-fashioned rabbi rather than one designed to fit a student for the needs of the American Jewish community.[22]

In the next half century, HUC introduced several curricular changes, including the return of Modern Hebrew and the development of more practical courses, culminating in the early 1950s with the establishment of a Department of Human Relations. Discussion of what should be part of the required canon for rabbinical students continued. The faculty debated issues regarding electives, Hebrew preparation, examinations, course content, thesis requirements, etc. Nonetheless, the 1985 course of study was fundamentally similar to the Kohler curriculum. Requirements in Bible, rabbinic literature, history, and philosophy still served as the pedagogical core. This can be seen by looking at the course of study currently offered in the rabbinical program at all three stateside campuses of

[22] Israel I. Mattuck, "A Student's Response to the Curriculum," letter to the President, 6 Feb. 1907, included in the Minutes of the Board of Governors of Hebrew Union College, n.d., 144.

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HUC.[23] The curriculum in 1985 on the New York campus is representative of the other school's programs and was divided into the following six areas: Hebrew Literature (2 required + 1 elective course), Bible (4 required + 3 elective courses), History (2 required + 2 elective courses), Rabbinics-Midrash, Talmud, Codes, Commentaries, Liturgy (6 required + 4 elective courses), Philosophy/Theology (2 required + 2 elective courses) and Professional Development, which includes Speech, Homiletics, Practical Rabbinics, Human Relations, and Education (5 required + 3 elective courses). In addition to these requirements, students participate in a Senior Practica, a thesis seminar, write a thesis, and have at least two years of professional fieldwork experience.[24]

Here I will examine three specific aspects of the revised HUC curriculum submitted to the President of HUC in 1988: the social context of the curriculum review, the constituencies that assembled it, and their various priorities; the key changes proposed in the curriculum; and the vision of the Reform rabbi proposed in this document.

[23] The Cincinnati and New York Schools offer full five-year programs leading to the Masters of Arts degree and ordination. The Los Angeles School offers a three-year program leading to the M.A.H.L. at which time students must transfer to one of the other campuses for their final two years of study.

[24] Catalogue ([Cincinnati]: Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion, 1990-93), 55-56.

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To analyze a curriculum, as I propose to do here, is to identify an implicit conception of educational virtue. Each set of priorities defines the content and influences the climate within which students find the opportunity to learn. But the theoretical domain is far removed from the operational. The revised HUC rabbinical curriculum represents the work of faculty members supplemented by administrators, alumni, students, and laity. But it is not coextensive with the practical arena of decisions, actions, and compromises that an operational curriculum entails.[25] It is a curriculum of intentions, viewed as exemplary by its authors. My analysis assumes that the new HUC curriculum is more significant for its theoretical aspects than for its practical prospects.

The Report is entitled "Innovators of Torah: Preparing Tomorrow's Rabbis for Reform Judaism." As the title describes it, the purpose of the proposed curriculum is to prepare rabbis for leadership roles in the context of the Reform Jewish community.

Rabbinical training cannot be viewed in a vacuum; it must be perceived in the context of the community in which the rabbi will function. A number of questions must be raised: who are the people to be served; what are their

[25] Compare John I. Goodlad, Frances M. Klein, and Kenneth A. Tye, "Domains of Curriculum and Their Study," in Curriculum Inquiry: The Study of Curriculum Practice, eds. John I. Goodlad and Assocs. (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1979), 43-75.

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religious needs and expectations; what is the social and cultural milieu in which they live; what impact has the high rate of exogamous marriage had on the life of the Reform Jewish community; what is it to deal with a laity whose members have a sophisticated secular education but an elementary Jewish one; how does Judaism speak to people who are deeply immersed in the secular society and unfamiliar with a religious approach to the world? While the hallmark of Reform Judaism is its diversity of religious expressions and the freedom to choose among them, this freedom can lead to a fragmented sense of Jewish identity. Thus to prepare rabbis for service in the contemporary community of Reform Jews, there is an urgent need to reflect seriously on the complex nature of Reform Jewish religious commitment.

As I have noted, a curriculum is an intricate document reflecting a host of concerns and assumptions. At HUC, the process of curricular reform included faculty, students, laity, and alumni. Each group voiced distinctive perspectives on the rabbinate and a particular definition of what is critical in rabbinical education: faculty were primarily concerned with studying and teaching their particular disciplines; students sought both knowledge and religious growth; rabbinical alumni focused on what would have been more helpful to them professionally; laity wanted to be assured that new Reform rabbis would possess the practical skills to function effectively in the larger

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Jewish community. While all of these constituent bodies sought rabbis who were learned and able to communicate their learning, this core agreement did not yield a single perspective on what is critical in the five years of instruction.

Each of these groups has a claim on the priorities of rabbinical education. The laity, for example, through congregational dues, play an important financial role in supporting HUC. They are also the ones who will live with their rabbis and endure the inability of some of them to perform their clerical duties. But they cannot be expected to appreciate fully the academic aspects of the rabbinical curriculum. For their part, the students have an emerging sense of the rabbinical experience but lack the perspective to know the best ingredients for their education as rabbis. Alumni can identify the areas where they wish they were better trained, yet in their ranks there is no consensus on "the configuration of values, virtues, and personality traits" or "sources, models, and experiences" that rabbinical training should cultivate (TFR 15). The faculty, as in any institution of higher learning, holds the most power in asserting what best constitutes a rabbinical education. At HUC, although serious attention was paid to each constituent body, the fact that the Task Force was totally comprised of faculty members must be noted in evaluating the final report.

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Addressing the various and often contradictory claims of the constituents, the report states:

> This conflict has long been with us and is usually characterized in terms of how the institution views itself--as a graduate school, as a seminary, or as a professional school. The opportunity provided by the curriculum review is not to resolve this inescapable conflict, which is often stated in starker terms than actually exists, but to respond to the contradictions as a challenge. (TFR 13)

The Task Force's reluctance to identify HUC strictly as a seminary stems from the dispassionate ideal of Wissenschaft des Judentums, a critical, empirical methodology that can be utilized in any other academic discipline. If a seminary is understood as a school for the training of ecclesiastics and as a place where their religious commitment is developed and nurtured, HUC, in contrast, has historically viewed itself as a college, a place of higher learning. While a seminary also trains students in a scholarly manner for a learned profession, it reflects the religious context in which that learning takes place. The Task Force's decision to avoid labeling the rabbinical school as a seminary reveals a tension between academic and religious vocation.

The new curriculum calls for changes in several significant areas. The major innovations are in: (1) orientation, (2) Hebrew language program, (3) clinical education, and (4) spiritual development. The core curriculum, based on the study of the Hebrew Bible, rabbinics, post-biblical Hebrew language and literature,

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history, philosophy, and theology, is fundamentally unchanged. However, the above-mentioned innovations in the program would be implemented through the full calendar year, a significant departure from the traditional nine-month academic calendar. Although the use of the full year allows for a more expansive education, one wonders about the other ramifications of requiring sixty months of uninterrupted exertion: financial pressures, stress, the lack of time to reflect or enjoy leisure. The question that remains is whether the effect of a full-year program would be salutary or deleterious to the welfare of the student.

1. The proposed curriculum calls for a required orientation period of several weeks for all students before their departure for the first Year-in-Israel Program. This orientation is designed to acquaint the students with Reform Judaism and the Reform rabbinate, to introduce them to Israeli culture and society, and finally to strengthen the students' Jewish identity. The immersion of HUC's first-year students in Israeli culture possesses a special excitement, but it has proven difficult for some. The students must confront multiple challenges: to learn Hebrew in its ancient and modern expressions; to live in a foreign environment unsympathetic to the American liberal rabbinate; to be left with scant time in the first year for any other intellectual pursuits; and to endure a year-long separation from loved ones in the United States. All of this has been

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a source of frustration for many first-year students. The proposed three-week orientation attempts to anchor the students in Reform Jewish identity and to inculcate the values of the HUC institutional culture before arrival in Israel. Establishing such an orientation program responds to the clarion call from all of the constituent bodies consulted to set the program into context before embarking on the demanding first year of study.[26]

2. The proposed curriculum addresses the importance of the Hebrew language and the need to intensify instruction. This has been a perennial concern of HUC faculty, and it is obviously essential to a curriculum in which so many courses are devoted to Hebrew texts. In the section of the Report dealing with recruitment and admission, it is printed in bold letters: "At least two years of college-level Hebrew during undergraduate education is recommended." Only a few paragraphs later, however, again in bold letters, this statement seems to be compromised: "the College-Institute will welcome any qualified student regardless of his/her Hebraic knowledge." Students with no prior Hebrew background are warned that they may need to spend additional time at HUC to compensate. There is then a discussion of the Hebrew program in Israel, including a proposed

[26] In 1991, several aspects of this proposal were introduced in a one-week orientation program which takes place on the Jerusalem campus before the fall semester begins each year. The program is directed and taught by two members of the faculty from one of the United States' campuses.

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compilation of Hebrew texts which all first-year students would be required to master before advancing to the second year of the program. This concern in the realm of language acquisition stems from the text studies which dominate the curriculum on the American campuses, and also from the frustration of the faculty in dealing with students at such disparate levels of Hebrew knowledge. Regarding both Hebrew and basic Jewish education, the faculty seems to prefer applicants with better backgrounds. Yet the report neither advocates nor demands Hebrew prerequisites for admission.[27]

3. Much attention is given to the importance of clinical education in the new curriculum: "The need to foster greater appreciation of the importance of practical rabbinic skills without compromising our academic integrity was emphasized by all groups" (TFR 44). The proposed Human Relations Program is designed with the requisite of a clinical base in all professionally oriented courses. In addition, summers would be utilized to provide students with internships at Jewish camps, congregations, Clinical Pastoral Education courses, and a variety of other settings. This recommendation also calls for the appointment of a full-time faculty member to teach and to supervise all aspects of this program. It is the creation of these clinical internships that necessitates the full-year

[27] A Hebrew prerequisite of one year of college Hebrew or its equivalent was implemented in the 1994-95 academic year.

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instructional schedule.[28] The recommendation responds to alumni and laity who have urged that the training of rabbis involve more practical experience and understanding. Although the Human Relations component is given a place of prominence in the new curriculum, one must note that no academic credit is awarded for the internships. The clinical program is relegated primarily to the summer months. Furthermore, almost all Human Relations courses are assigned half the credit (1.5 units) of a regular course (3 units). There is reason to wonder just where the clinical-based education component stands in the hierarchy of values promulgated by HUC.[29]

4. Throughout the curriculum document the spiritual development of the rabbi is emphasized. Beginning with the Report's introduction, there is discussion of the role of spiritual formation at HUC. It is suggested at one point that the HUC program is "not equipped to teach 'spirituality' or spiritual leadership," but the argument is

[28] Beginning in the summer of 1992, several practice-based summer residencies under the supervision of a mentor in congregational settings, Hillel Foundation, Jewish organizations, and hospital chaplaincies were offered to rabbinical students.

[29] The subordination of clinical/pastoral education to ancillary status is hardly unprecedented. In G.J. Planck's Introduction to the Theological Sciences (1794/5), pastoral theology is assigned to an appendix rather than to the main text. Planck apparently reasoned that the application rather than the production of knowledge concerning religion did not belong among the genuine theological sciences. See Charles M. Wood, Vision and Discernment: An Orientation in Theological Study (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1985), 7.

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also advanced that HUC "could and should take a more active role in the spiritual development of its students" (TFR 15). The Task Force concludes that the latter view would define HUC as predominantly a seminary.

> Such a goal is in tension with our historic commitment. . . . The College-Institute is committed to academic excellence and objective scholarship. Our model traditionally has been the university, more so than the seminary. Both in the selection of professors and in our instruction, our model has been the highly trained specialist and scholar. The goal has been the attainment of objective knowledge. It is possible that an emphasis on developing spirituality would compromise our objectivity and our dedication to "free inquiry." (TFR 16)

Ultimately, the report suggests a solution: that the tension between HUC as an institution committed to objective scholarship and as a seminary devoted to spiritual development "is to be approached not as an 'either/or' but as an 'and'--not as either free, objective inquiry or spiritual commitment, but rather with a commitment to both" (TFR 16). Following several pages of discussion about the need to be aware of the spiritual dimension, it was recommended that an ordained rabbi be appointed at each campus as a resident advisor and spiritual mentor (TFR 83). The primary role of this rabbi would be to help students in their spiritual growth and to respond to the concern reflected in the proposed curriculum that there is "a growing disparity between scholarly mastery of sources and the ability to elicit religious values and meanings from them" (TFR 51). Like the proposed clinical internship

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program, this recommendation would require HUC to engage new faculty. But there is little discussion of how existing faculty would participate in the mentoring process.

The four foregoing innovations constitute the most important revisions of the rabbinical curriculum. Other concerns are expressed: more sensitivity to issues of gender; the need for faculty to serve as role models; more room for electives to help students pursue advanced study; and a higher value to be placed on continuing education for the ordained rabbi. All of these concerns bespeak a curriculum that aspires to train the rabbi as a learned individual and to prepare students professionally and spiritually for the world they will encounter upon ordination.

Yet what remains at the heart of the proposed curriculum is the traditional focus on texts: "Grounding in the traditional disciplines remains essential" (TFR 42). An examination of the core and elective requirements shows that four new text courses would be introduced into the curriculum. In this respect, there is little difference between the current curriculum and the proposed one, except that in the latter more clinical-based work is added and the summer months are utilized.

An important dimension of rabbinical education not included in the formal curriculum and only indirectly referred to in the Task Force Report is the addition of

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extracurricular programs which help the student to address personal and professional issues. Learning opportunities taking place outside the classroom include synagogue services (where students lead worship and give sermons); community sermon discussions; retreats; one-day programs on specific subjects, e.g., social action, sexual harassment, and stress management; visits by rabbinical alumni; "case presentations" on specific professional issues; advisement of the students by faculty members; and interseminary activities. These programs provide an important dimension of rabbinical education, yet they are rarely acknowledged as part of the formal curriculum.

Two paragraphs of discussion (TFR 46, 85) are devoted to the notion of integrating academic and professional components of the curriculum. However, this is not given the force of a recommendation, despite the argument made primarily by alumni for

> less compartmentalization and more integration in the academic aspect of our course of study, in the professional training courses, and in relating the two areas to each other. There is a widespread feeling of fragmentation: students possess many threads which have not been adequately woven into a sustaining fabric. (TFR 46)[30]

[30] John B. Cobb, Jr., "Claiming the Center," Criterion 25 (Winter 1986): 7, speaks of this fragmentation: "Much of the problem of the university is the result of the disciplinary organization of knowledge. This has obviously proven extremely powerful and effective in the directing of research, the expansion of knowledge, and the increase of dominion over other creatures. What it cannot do is overcome the fragmentation it generates or respond to urgent new issues as they arise."

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Yet greater integration of academic coursework, clinical experience, and professional development appears to be acceptable to the faculty only when it would not compromise their particular disciplines. New personnel would be required in the clinical and professional areas. Implementation would presumably be left to the discretion of those faculty members inclined, qualified, and willing to seek integration and to be sensitive to professional concerns in the context of their course offerings.[31]

The curriculum report is entitled "Innovators of Torah," a phrase inspired by a post-biblical rabbinic homily cited in full on the front cover.[32] The title apparently offers a description of the rabbi that the new curriculum hopes to produce. The Report's introduction describes the ideal rabbi as "a scholar, a model of highest moral integrity and religiosity, and (master of) the skills required to perform his/her rabbinic duties" (TFR 8). This is followed by a description of the knowledge a rabbi should

[31] Neil Gillman, "On the Religious Education of American Rabbis," in Caring for the Commonweal: Education for Religious and Public Life, eds. Parker J. Palmer, Barbara G. Wheeler, and James W. Fowler (Macon: Mercer Univ. Press, 1990), 111-29, analyzes three dimensions of rabbinical education: academic, professional, and religious. He calls upon rabbinical school faculty to "go beyond the explication of the text and expose their own personal struggle with its existential significance" (p. 124).

[32] "Happy is he who innovates Torah. He is like one who is informed from on high. The Holy One, blessed be He, says to him: 'My son, My great house of study is yours,' as it is written, 'God will choose the innovators'" (Seder Eliahu Rabbah XI).

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possess and the professional skills and personal qualities requisite for the rabbinate. The roles envisioned for the rabbi include counselor, teacher, preacher, and social activist. The report concludes that

> the rabbi brings a unique spiritual Jewish component to every area of his/her endeavors. Our ordained graduates should be trained to distill from the traditional sources and from the totality of the Jewish experience the insights which they will apply to the concrete day-to-day situations of their rabbinic practice. (TFR 14)

This last citation gives meaning to the notion of rabbi as "innovator of Torah." Yet what is it to be an innovator? Does it mean to be creative with Torah, that is, with the teachings of Judaism? Another ancient rabbinic text is cited in the front matter of the Report:

> On the verse (Deut. 32:2) "May my teachings fall like the rain [whose individual drops combine into pools]," [the first century C.E.] Rabbi Meir commented: "Strive always to integrate [the detailed] words of Torah into general principles. If you accumulate only details, they will exhaust you, and you will not know how to act. But if you combine the details [into broad principles], you will be equipped to derive from the universal principles the specifics which you may apply to every circumstance." (Siphre Ha'azinu 306)

This text amplifies the notion of Torah innovator: one steeped in knowledge (the details), who knows how to derive broad principles, and who is then able to apply them to the specifics of the real world. This is an intriguing model of rabbinic innovation. Yet what is unclear is the connection between this classical text, the title "Innovators of Torah," and the substance of the curriculum document. What

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skills are required for expanding details into broad principles? How does one teach these skills? Moreover, applying broad principles to specific life situations involves another set of skills and understandings. For the Reform rabbi, the urgent issues are no longer halakhic matters that need to be resolved. As discussed in the previous chapter, many Jews today are thoroughly acculturated and often alienated from their religion, with little Jewish knowledge, high rates of intermarriage, broken or blended families, and the full range of social problems afflicting the prevailing culture. Rabbis are rarely trained or equipped to cope with these conditions.

The ideal of innovating Torah, although abstract, might offer a model for curricular offerings if properly developed. How would this model of the rabbinate differ from the traditional notion of rabbi as master and interpreter of Jewish law? This question may well deserve the attention of HUC and of the leadership of the Reform Movement.

To be an innovator of Torah, one must first know Torah, and the proposed curriculum would maintain a deep commitment to Jewish learning. Debates over the specific contents of the textual canon of rabbinical education do not occupy the Report at great length; it is apparently assumed that a course of study lasting five years should provide enough opportunity for basic textual facility. But to be an

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innovator--to bring ancient texts to life, to know when and how to utilize them, to understand that they must be applied in different ways to different situations--this task involves skills and insights which the new curriculum fails to address. For example, the late Rabbi Daniel Jeremy Silver compared the task of the rabbi to that of an artist.

> The artist's task is to have an aesthetic impact: to enable people to see and to communicate what he/she sees. The rabbi's task is to have a spiritual impact: to deepen Jewish commitment, to enable people to become meaningfully involved in Jewish concerns, and to communicate effectively the substance of the Jewish message. Each serious artist develops a personal style. Each rabbi can, and should, do the same.[33]

One looks in vain in the Curriculum Report for such a perspective. It cannot be acquired from clinical internships, especially when relegated to the summer months, nor from professional development courses left to faculty that may never be engaged. The new curriculum does not attempt to formulate ways in which the claim of innovation can become a reality. More serious attention needs to be paid to spiritual development, religious identity, personal growth, and professional competence, because without these attainments the rabbi will not have the "spiritual impact" to which he or she aspires.

The HUC curriculum review engaged hundreds of people--its faculty authors as well as laity, students, and alumni consulted over a period of nearly three years. The critical

[33] Silver, 13.

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inquiry and self-reflection of each constituent group and the subsequent process of dialogue and debate demonstrated a vigorous institutional life and a transformative potential. The process itself was salutary. Ultimately, the Report promoted at least some consciousness-raising on the part of faculty members. Yet it may be asked whether HUC's curriculum reform will be allowed to gather dust on a faculty shelf, leaving HUC committed, in Charles Liebman's phrase, to "tradition and continuity," and not to "renewal and change."

Curriculum reform is an ongoing process. This is acknowledged by the Task Force Report, where it is given the force of a recommendation:

> The Task Force strongly urges that an inter-campus committee . . . meet at the end of the second year . . . and annually thereafter to evaluate the effectiveness of the curriculum and recommend necessary changes. (TFR 96)

Yet as of November, 1994, six years after the submission of the report, the committee had yet to have its first meeting. In fact, the majority of the recommendations of the Task Force Report have yet to be implemented, including the appointment of a full-time religious mentor for each campus or the appointment of a full-time director of the professional program.

The HUC curriculum proposal offers both a theoretical model for the training of rabbis and practical recommendations for revision of the curriculum. Should the

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suggestions be implemented, they will need to be tested, modified, and revised. The utilization of the full calendar year, the role of the clinical-based education component, the nature of the orientation program, the role of spiritual development, etc., will require ongoing evaluation. The report of the Task Force at least sets the agenda for critical discussion of the rabbinical curriculum.

The foregoing survey of the recent evaluations of rabbinical curriculum in the Conservative, Reconstructionist, and Orthodox Movements, together with the more detailed review of the HUC Task Force Report, suggest four emerging trends in contemporary Jewish theological education.

1. Clinical education. At each of the seminaries, the rabbinical curriculum now reflects the importance of practical experience, ideally under the supervision of a rabbi or mentor. HUC's summer internship programs are the leading example.

2. Integration of academic, professional, and spiritual development. At the three non-Orthodox seminaries, this goal emerges as a priority, reflecting a perception of fragmentation in the current course of study. JTS' rabbinical school seminar has been specifically introduced in response to this need.

3. Heightened social awareness. Each of the curricula reflects greater acquaintance with the secular social

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realities in which the rabbi will function. For example, the RIETS curriculum now includes a unit on contemporary halakhah, focusing on current social issues; at RRC, the addition of courses in comparative religious studies suggests a widened ecumenical perspective.

4. Spiritual formation. With the possible exception of RIETS, there is greater concern at the rabbinical seminaries about the spiritual development of the student. HUC's curriculum review calls for a rabbinical advisor on campus whose primary duties would be to serve as a spiritual mentor to the students.

Despite these trends, however, it should be emphasized that the core components of rabbinical education have not really changed. The rabbi is still seen, at least in the eyes of the faculty, as preeminently a scholar, not a pastor. The foundation of the curriculum of each of the Jewish seminaries is the commitment to classical Hebrew text study. The vast majority of course time in the five-year graduate programs of HUC, JTS, and RRC, as well as in the four-year program at RIETS (where most students enter with extensive Judaica backgrounds), is devoted to rabbinic texts. This is explained, at least in part, by the predominance of the seminary faculties in establishing curriculum priorities and policies, regardless of the participation of other constituencies (students, alumni, laity) in the review process. The revised HUC curriculum

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relies on their willingness to serve as mentors, help the students to integrate their learning, and create a nurturing and supportive environment. Yet although consideration is given to these areas, the most important qualifications in faculty appointment and promotion remain the candidate's scholarly abilities. Given this priority, it is not surprising that faculty regard their non-academic roles as subordinate. The verdict of the HUC Task Force Report defines the ultimate fact of contemporary rabbinical education: "No radical transformation either in the structure or contents of our curriculum is called for" (TFR 42).

Rabbinical curricula have rarely entered the contemporary discussion of theological education. This may be attributed to centuries of religious insularity. But the prevailing secular culture of America has collapsed much of the historic distance between the Jewish and Christian communities of faith. The education and professional training of clergy pose similar challenges to both: how to negotiate the gulf between the secular and the spiritual; how to conciliate academic and religious institutional models; how to cultivate the life of the mind without neglecting the care of the soul. More specifically, both Jewish and Christian seminaries face the tasks of integrating the academic, professional, and spiritual aspects of the curriculum; providing more structured and

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better supervised field experiences; engaging in ongoing curricular review; placing more value on informal learning opportunities; and preparing and affirming the faculty for their rcles not just as scholars but as teachers and mentors.

The next chapter will examine the issues which have shaped North American Protestant theological education, the models of ministry that have evolved, and the curricular paradigms that have emerged. This literature will be analyzed to see what light it may shed on the development of a curricular paradigm for the education of the contemporary Reform rabbi.

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CHAPTER 3

Protestant Theological Education: Curricular Paradigms and Models of Ministry

Throughout history, the paradigm of the rabbinate and the training of rabbis were influenced by the dominant cultures of which specific Jewish communities were a part. Contemporary rabbinical training in the United States has been no exception to this pattern. The rabbi's role in this country has been cast in the mold of the Protestant clergy. As religious functionaries, community representatives, and communicators of spiritual values and insights, American rabbis, like their Protestant counterparts, serve their faith communities in similar ways. Models of Protestant theological education offer an obvious, if neglected, resource for the evaluation of modern rabbinical training.

This chapter provides a summary history and analysis of North American Protestant theological education during the last two centuries, with greater emphasis on the last fifty years. Three major areas are explored: the primary issues confronting theological education since the early nineteenth century, with particular focus on the decade from 1983 to 1993; the models of the ministry that emerge from seminary curricula, and the curriculum revisions that have been offered to prepare students for the contemporary ministry.

Prior to the opening of America's first seminary, the Andover Theological Seminary, in 1808, students prepared for the ministry by a program of private study with either an

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ordained pastor, a professor at a university, or under the direction of the local Presbytery.[1] The Andover curriculum focused on Bible, Theology, Rhetoric, and Church History.[2] The Theological Seminary of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America, established at Princeton University in 1812, developed along the same lines as Andover, offering a three-year graduate academic program. These two seminaries were the forerunners of others established in the next decades. At most of these schools, the core courses were in Bible, Theology, and Church History, with supplementary instruction in Homiletics, Rhetoric, etc.[3]

In the middle of the nineteenth century, American scholars began to pursue advanced degrees in theology in German universities.[4] There they encountered a theoretical framework for the study of theology known as "Theological Encyclopedia," including four distinct disciplines: Bible, Systematic Theology (Dogmatics), Ecclesiastical History, and

[1] For a full discussion of this pre-seminary model, see Robert Wood Lynn's, "Notes Toward a History: Theological Encyclopedia and the Evolution of Protestant Seminary Curriculum, 1808-1868," Theological Education 17 (Spring 1981), 118-44.

[2] Leonard Woods, History of the Andover Theological Seminary (Boston: James R. Osgood and Co., 1885), 186.

[3] Lynn, 123.

[4] Lynn, 123-25. Many Jewish scholars were also educated in German universities through the 1930s.

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Practical Theology.[5] The Americans were impressed with this orderly and scientific approach to theological education. The organization of the curriculum in the four-fold Theological Encyclopedia pattern remains the predominant structure of North American theological education.[6] Although separated into four distinct disciplines, the curriculum was essentially divided into two major parts, "scientific" and "practical." That Practical Theology would be ascribed less scholarly status is already evident in G. J. Planck's Introduction to the Theological Sciences (1794/95), where pastoral theology is relegated to the appendix.[7] The disparity between the practical and theoretical areas of clergy training is a fundamental characteristic of the seminary to the present day.

In Friedrich Schleiermacher's (1768-1834) Brief Outline on the Study of Theology (1811), another approach to theological education is offered. Schleiermacher organizes the study of theology into three disciplines: Practical,

[5] A concise summary of the development of the Theological Encyclopedia is given by G. Heinrici in "Encyclopedia, Theological," in The New Schaff-Herzog Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge, ed. Samuel Macauley Jackson, vol. 4 (New York: Funk and Wagnalls, 1909), 125-28.

[6] Edward Farley, Theologia: The Fragmentation and Unity of Theological Education (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1983), 73.

[7] See Wood, 7.

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Historical, and Philosophical Theology.[8] Practical Theology is "a discipline which assesses the activities, procedures, and operations of the Church's ministry."[9] By "Practical Theology," Schleiermacher means critical thinking as well as the practical exigencies of the ministry. It is a theoretical discipline, not just a label for practical skills courses. Practical Theology is "the normative field which critically apprehends the rules for carrying out the tasks of ministry."[10] The three other disciplines of the "four-fold pattern," Bible, History, and Dogmatics, are included in his second category, Historical Theology. The third category, Philosophical Theology, identifies and clarifies the terms of theological discourse and deals with both apologetics and polemics.[11]

Schleiermacher's structural reorganization of the curriculum did not have lasting impact, but his concept of the ministry as a profession signified a major shift in the conceptualization of both theology and ministry. His notion of theology as a science led to its elevated status as an academic discipline. Schleiermacher developed the "clerical paradigm," that is, the study of theology as the training

[8] Friedrich Schleiermacher, Brief Outline on the Study of Theology, trans. Terrence N. Tice (Richmond: John Knox Press, 1966).

[9] Farley, 91.

[10] Farley, 91.

[11] Farley, 93.

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for ministry, and advocated the inclusion of theological studies with law and medicine in the newly founded University of Berlin.[12]

The four-fold structure of theological education was brought into serious question by William Rainey Harper (1856-1906), founding president of the University of Chicago.[13] Harper published an essay in 1899 in which he calls for a new model of training for the ministry.

> The model in accordance with which the modern theological seminaries have been organized had its origin a century or more ago; but while the environment of the seminary has utterly changed in this century, the seminary itself has remained practically at a standstill. To say the least, there are to be found in its organization and curriculum many survivals from the oldest times. These survivals are out of harmony with the whole situation as it exists today.[14]

He calls for the seminary curriculum to be revised in two major ways: (1) the curriculum should utilize the insights and findings of psychology and pedagogy and be designed to address the particular needs of each student; and (2) the curriculum should be grounded in the social reality of the world in which the student is preparing to work.[15] He

[12] David H. Kelsey, Between Athens and Berlin: The Theological Education Debate (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing, 1993), 15-16.

[13] William Rainey Harper, "Shall the Theological Curriculum be Modified, and How?" American Journal of Theology 3 (Jan. 1899): 45-66.

[14] Harper, 46.

[15] Harper, 46-47.

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argues that "the seminary is not a place in which men are to learn certain views, or to receive and adopt certain opinions. It is rather a place in which men shall be taught to think."[16] Harper is against compulsory Hebrew, arguing that it means little to most students. He wants to devote more time to reading the great works of English literature and to developing the students' expository skills. The current curriculum gave little attention to the larger themes and issues emerging from Bible study. While the traditional four-fold curriculum prepared ministers for preaching, Harper contends that there are other equally important aspects to the contemporary minister's work. He is keenly aware of the many demands placed on the minister and acknowledges that it is impossible to master all areas. He advocates a curriculum that allows for specialization, e.g., preaching, pastoral work, teaching, administration, etc. "To put the whole matter in a single proposition: The day has come for a broadening of the meaning of the word minister. . . ."[17]

Harper's proposal calls for many more electives, with no more than one-third to one-half required courses for all students. He recommends more comparative work, e.g., taking spiritual themes and tracing them through different works of literature. He also suggests seminars that would encourage

[16] Harper, 47.

[17] Harper, 59.

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independent thinking, and "clinics" for the study of various aspects of the practical ministry, including time away from the seminary under the supervision of a church pastor. Finally, Harper recommends that another year be added to seminary education for students who wish to pursue further study.[18]

Harper's proposals amount to a reconceptualization of theological education. Reassessing the role of the traditional framework of scientific disciplines, Harper wishes to consider what the minister actually needs in preparation for ministry at the turn of the twentieth century. He conceives of the minister as a professional, like the doctor or lawyer. Clearly, Harper's suggestions posed a threat to theological educators whose commitment to the four-fold pattern reflected their own scholarly achievements and interests.

Nearly ninety years later, Cornel West of Princeton University raised many of the same questions, calling once again for a shift from the four-fold division of the curriculum.[19] West articulates much of Harper's original message in his description of the modern minister as one who must be "a learned proponent of an interpretation of the Christian faith in conversation with other disciplines:

[18] Harper, 59-63.

[19] Cornel West, "The Crisis in Theological Education," in Prophetic Fragments (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing, 1988), 277.

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anthropology, sociology, philosophy, history, etc."[20] Although Harper's specific proposals did not have direct impact on most seminaries, the questions he raised continue to be asked. They have laid the foundation for much of the discourse on theological education in the twentieth century.

Nonetheless, the four-fold curriculum has continued to predominate in theological education. In The Education of American Ministers, published in 1934, this fact is acknowledged:

> Whether we consider the time given to them, the importance attached to them, or the number and distinction of teachers who are responsible for them, they form the common core of the curriculum in practically all of the seminaries.[21]

Yet confusion persisted about the kind of ministry for which students were being prepared. Seminary faculty, laity, and ministers all had different viewpoints about the role of the minister.[22] As the number of course offerings proliferated, with a curricular "sprawl" of specialized courses, the need was expressed for a more integrated course of study: "The student should be helped to see the curriculum of theological education as a whole."[23]

[20] West, 277.

[21] William A. Brown, The Education of American Ministers, vol. 1 (New York: Institute of Social and Religious Research, 1934), 121.

[22] Mark May, W. A. Brown, et al., The Education of American Ministers, vol. 2 (New York: Institute of Social and Religious Research, 1934), 389.

[23] Brown, 1:128.

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While other studies were funded through the next decades, the one which reformulated many of the questions confronting theological educators was conducted by H. Richard Niebuhr, Daniel Day William, and James M. Gustafson, published in The Advancement of Theological Education (1957), and in Niebuhr's work, The Purpose of the Church and Its Ministry (1956). The continuous and almost haphazard introduction of innovative courses responding to issues of the moment leads Niebuhr to describe the theological curriculum as having been "'enriched' - like vitamin impregnated bread."[24] Niebuhr decries this development, contending that "the present curriculum of theological schools is a collection of studies rather than a course of study."[25] He argues that in order to prepare students for the ministry there must be a clear notion of the role of the minister. The purpose of the minister's functions, the nature of one's call to the ministry, the authority of the minister, and the people whom the minister serves must guide the seminary's course of study.

Niebuhr calls for a reshaping of theological education based on his model of the minister as pastoral director.[26] The pastoral director fulfills all the normal roles of the

[24] H. Richard Niebuhr, The Purpose of the Church and Its Ministry: Reflections on the Aims of Theological Education (New York: Harper and Bros., 1956), 98.

[25] H. Richard Niebuhr, 99.

[26] H. Richard Niebuhr, 115-16.

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minister but organizes them in a different manner. As pastor, the minister counsels and teaches congregants about Christian identity. As director, the minister facilitates all activity under the umbrella framework of the educational institution which he must manage and lead. In the decade of the 1950s, when suburban areas in America were burgeoning and many new churches were being formed, the focus for the pastoral director must be the nuclear congregation and its well-being. According to this model, teaching and preaching recede in importance to the more critical skills of counseling and administration needed to sustain the congregation.[27]

Although other studies were conducted sporadically during the next twenty-five years, it was Edward Farley's 1983 publication of Theologia that spawned a critical engagement by many theological educators on the subject. Farley's concern is that

> theology has long since disappeared as the unity, subject matter, and end of clergy education and this disappearance is responsible more than anything else for the problematic character of that education as a course of study.[28]

The critiques of theological education offered by students, faculty, and alumni reflect the "symptoms more than the disease."[29] The disease, for Farley, is the erosion of

[27] H. Richard Niebuhr, 82.

[28] Farley, ix.

[29] Farley, 3.

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theological unity in all courses offered in seminary curricula. He is concerned that theological schools have become too concerned about professional education, the "clerical paradigm." His book turns the object of theological education from practical matters to conceptual concerns.

Farley defines three attributes critical to theological education: (1) knowledge of "eccelesical existence" and the interpretive skills to understand it; (2) theological understanding itself; and (3) theology of leadership.[30] Farley offers suggestions concerning seminary curricula but does not explicitly propose guidelines for a new model of theological education. It was among seminary faculty, the scholars of the Protestant church, that Farley's work had its greatest impact, for it drew them into the discussion of the crisis in theological education. They began to devote renewed attention to the development of theological education. Some proposed new models for the ministry, and others offered specific curricular suggestions. Here I will survey several works focusing on curricular proposals and the models of ministry they reflect.

Joseph C. Hough, Jr., and John B. Cobb, Jr., in Christian Identity and Theological Education, argue that the problem is not that theological schools give too much attention to professional education but that they fail to

[30] Farley, 182-84.

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give adequate definition to the role of the professional minister.[31] A theological school should be viewed primarily as a professional school. In order to be properly prepared, one must understand Christian practice and contemporary identity. Hough and Cobb define the religious leader as a "Practical Theologian." The "Practical Theologian" is a synthesis of the "Practical Christian Thinker" and the "Reflective Practitioner." The "Practical Christian Thinker" has a clear understanding of his/her own Christian identity, is able to reflect on the nature of that identity, has a perception of how that identity shapes his/her world view, and an ability to discern from this view its implications for action.[32] The model of the "Reflective Practitioner" is based on the work of Donald Schoen.[33] Schoen contends that the best insights of professionals are based not on theoretical learning but on knowledge gained through reflection on practice.[34] For Hough and Cobb, these two models offer distinct but complementary paradigms for contemporary ministry. The "Practical Christian Thinker" is

[31] Joseph C. Hough, Jr., and John B. Cobb, Jr., Christian Identity and Theological Education (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1985), 5.

[32] Hough and Cobb, 81-84.

[33] See Donald Schoen, The Reflective Practitioner: How Professionals Think in Action (New York: Basic Books, 1983); and Educating the Reflective Practitioner: Toward a New Design for Teaching and Learning in the Profession (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers, 1987).

[34] See Schoen, Reflective Practitioner.

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an activist, clearly able to articulate a personal identity, leadership, and vision for the church. The "Reflective Practitioner" collaborates with the congregation to assess the activities in which they are engaged. It should be noted that the "Practical Theologian" does not provide a functional description of the minister. It merely describes the minister's approach to ministry as "a mode of reflection that continuously reevaluates the use of time and energy in and by the church in light of what the church truly is."[35] Like Farley's concept of theological education, the "Practical Theologian" has a unified approach to ministry that is manifest in all ministerial duties.

Hough and Cobb offer a concrete curricular proposal for the training of the "Practical Theologian." Although the curriculum is still divided into four discrete areas, its divisions are based on their concept of the minister's role. The study of the classical four-fold disciplines (Bible, Church History, Dogmatics, Practical Theology) as independent and discrete entities would cease. Instead they would be drawn upon as resources helping to prepare the student for the professional ministry. The first section of the curriculum (7 courses) deals with the shaping of Christian identity. The course offerings in this area place the Christian heritage in relationship to Judaism, other religions, major philosophies, and historical shifts in

[35] Hough and Cobb, 92.

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society. The second section (1 course) focuses on the global context of ministry, addressing issues like world hunger and oppression. The third section (7 courses), Practical Christian Thinking, is where issues of theology and ethics are examined. The integrated disciplinary approach seeks to develop the student's ability to reflect on complicated ethical and theological issues manifest in the church. The fourth section (9 courses) addresses the area of professional preparation. It reflects Hough and Cobb's commitment to the "clerical paradigm" by allotting to this section the highest number of courses. The emphasis here is not on learning theory; Hough and Cobb concur with Schoen that most professionals do not apply theory to practice.[36] Their emphasis is on learning from practice and having the ability to interpret practice in a theoretical context.

Hough and Cobb's curriculum is not intended to be a "radical" transformation of seminary curriculum.[37] But they demonstrate how some restructuring and reconceptualizing might have significant impact on theological education. Like Niebuhr, they are concerned with the continued increase in the number of courses offered at Protestant seminaries. At times it appears as though each new issue has a course designed for it. They do not see this "enriched" curriculum

[36] Hough and Cobb, 118.

[37] Hough and Cobb, 128.

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as the best way of dealing with the contemporary ministry. Systematic reflection on the practice and theology of the ministry undergirds much of the Hough and Cobb proposal. They also introduce what they call "contextual education," attempting to integrate the academic pursuit in the classroom with the practical issues in the field. Often utilized in the arts of ministry courses, this approach is neglected in the academic sphere. Hough and Cobb seek integration in all of the curriculum components, including the academic core. Finally, they advocate a new approach to field education, one which is more like a medical internship. After completion of their academic program, students would be placed in internships in specially trained teaching congregations. Here, in conjunction with the senior pastor, the laity, and the faculty of the seminary, the student would spend a year or two in actual ministry and in reflection about one's practice. Thus the training of church leaders becomes a shared mission of both the seminary and the church.[38]

[38] A similar proposal is offered by James F. Hopewell in "A Congregational Paradigm for Theological Education," in Beyond Clericalism: The Congregation as a Focus for Theological Education, eds. Joseph C. Hough, Jr. and Barbara G. Wheeler (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1988), 1-9. Hopewell wants to change theological education from the clerical paradigm to a congregational paradigm. His goal is not just the students' growth but the congregation's development. His aim "is to join seminary and congregation in a quest for the redemptive community" (Hopewell, 4). His proposal is more theoretical than practical but provides the basis for serious discourse on how seminaries and congregations might more effectively work together in the training of religious

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In 1987, the Institute for the Advanced Study of Religion sponsored a conference on the work of Hough and Cobb, and many of the papers were subsequently published in book form.[39] Several attempt to refine or expand the proposed model of the ministry and the nature of the training needed. Rebecca Chopp, for example, agrees with Hough and Cobb that the major social questions of the day, "sexism, racism, environmental destruction, anti-Semitism, nuclear holocaust, and globalization," must inform theological education.[40] Although Chopp acknowledges Hough and Cobb in addressing the "sin of misogyny," she argues that they have not fully integrated women's experience into theological education. She reflects on her own seminary experiences as student and teacher and asserts that although there are special classes in feminist theology or feminist services, fundamentally women are asked to function like men, e.g., read texts in the same way, study and work in the same manner.[41] She also argues that their proposal of the church reflects a "bourgeois ecclesiology." Hough and Cobb's understanding of the church, according to Chopp, is

leaders.

[39] Don S. Browning, David Polk, and Ian S. Evison, eds., The Education of the Practical Theologian: Responses to Joseph Hough and John Cobb's Christian Identity and Theological Education (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1989).

[40] Rebecca Chopp, "When the Center Cannot Contain the Margins," in Browning et al., 63.

[41] Chopp, 65.

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based on the mainstream middleclass church. Her argument is that the seminary and the church can no longer fit into a circle which has a center and an exterior boundary.

> To say it another way, the circle, even the circle without circumferences, can no longer contain the margins, can no longer contain its ruptures and fissures. . . . The point is not whether the church will have a strong identity, but whether or not it has anything at all to say to the world.[42]

Chopp raises an important point in her articulation of the needs of those on the margin. The margins may no longer be regarded as the periphery; they may be understood to constitute the essence of the circle of Christianity.

Frank Reynolds offers a lengthy critique of the Hough-Cobb proposal and suggests another model of the minister, that of "Christian bricoleur."[43] He bases the model on the work of anthropologist Claude Lévi-Strauss, who transformed the common meaning of bricoleur as "jack of all trades" to refer to religious professionals "who employ a certain limited kind of imaginative and skillful means to ply their trade as practitioners of mythic thought."[44] Reynolds expands the definition of "Christian bricoleur" by defining him/her as a religious leader who utilizes

> imaginative and skillful means to implement and facilitate the various processes (mythic, ritual,

[42] Chopp, 76.

[43] Frank E. Reynolds, "Religious Imagination and the Culturation of Christian Worlds or the Minister as Christian Bricoleur," in Browning et al., 104.

[44] Reynolds, 104.

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> institutional) through which Christian communities and Christian individuals continually act to constitute and reconstitute Christian worlds.[45]

Reynolds sees the "Christian bricoleur" and Hough and Cobb's "Practical Theologian" as complementary to one another. Together they combine active and creative abilities with a reflective and discerning sensibility.

Reynolds also offers a revised version of the Hough-Cobb curriculum. Although radically different from the four-fold curriculum, his proposal is still organized into four units. The first area (6 courses) revolves around the historical heritage that shapes identity. The second area (6 courses) addresses religious experience and expression: the history of religious life and the nature of religious leadership with a subsection devoted to the Christian "classics" (3 courses). The third area focuses on contemporary issues requiring practical Christian thinking (6 courses). The fourth area (6 courses) is devoted to professional preparation. While Reynolds is more concerned than Hough and Cobb with historical focus, both curricula emphasize the need for the student to develop critical thinking and professional skills, as well as the ability to integrate academic and professional studies. Both proposals seek to clarify the student's identity as a Christian and to cultivate his or her ability to engender it in others.

[45] Reynolds, 104.

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God's Fierce Whimsy (1985) serves as a very different type of reflection on theological education. Written by several feminist theologians, identified as The Mud Flower Collective, the book does not revisit the history of theological education or development of the four-fold curriculum; nor does it offer an explicit critique of contemporary seminaries. It is written as a model of theological education. The authors characterize their work as collaborative and maintain that it reflects a diversity of cultures. They hold the belief that all learning begins with the study of one's own story.

> We believe that this is where all research, teaching, and learning should begin. This sets us in marked contrast with the intellectual claim and theological methodology of "malestream" scholarship, in which to be academically excellent is to be objective (a matter of personal disinterest). Such a claim is not only pretentious, it is a sham.[46]

Their theology is rooted in listening to the human story, which, in their view, has for too long been neglected. Theological education must begin with the critical study of one's own life and one's life in relation to others. Only then can academic or professional subject matter be approached. They articulate the goal of theological education as the doing of justice, "which requires the liberation of all people from structures of

[46] Katie G. Cannon et al. (The Mud Flower Collective), God's Fierce Whimsy: Christian Feminism and Theological Education (Cleveland: Pilgrim Press, 1985), 24.

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oppression. . . ."[47] Their comments on curriculum are brief: knowledge cannot be detached from the knower; there must be a focus on cultural pluralism; and white male culture can no longer be the barometer of excellence or competence. Regarding pedagogical method, they formulate an approach based on mutuality among all participants, ongoing dialogue, a willingness to admit mistakes, and an insistence that theory is derived from life and practice. Although they differ dramatically from Farley on the nature of theology, they share with him the concern for a unified theological perspective.

Marjorie Suchocki helps to elucidate the nature of theological education described by The Mud Flower Collective.[48] She criticizes the hierarchical relationship between seminary and church, faculty and student, and pastor and parishioner. In its place she proposes an alternative paradigm of relationship based on "mutuality, friendship and partnership,"[49] a notion with potential relevance not only to seminary education but to ministry itself. The work of Suchocki and The Mud Flower Collective suggests that if seminarians can learn in a different manner, starting with their own experience, and if they can learn in a supportive

[47] Cannon et al., 204.

[48] Marjorie Hewitt Suchocki, "Friends in the Family: Church, Seminary and Theological Education," in Hough and Wheeler, 49.

[49] Suchocki, "Friends," 54.

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and respectful atmosphere of true partnership, this in itself will prepare ministers more effectively to pursue justice, knowledge, and religious insight. They do not believe that an academically sterile environment fosters such growth. Rather, they contend that "real education and spiritual growth occur only where it is impossible to avoid the conflicts and tensions that rend our world and the lives of each of us."[50]

Suchocki's paradigm of ministry also includes the notion of the "learned minister." With Farley she is concerned that "our seminaries tend to graduate students who know a little about a lot but not much of anything."[51] Although many congregants may possess a variety of skills and secular knowledge, they are often "religiously illiterate." In order for the minister to educate his/her congregants, the minister must master a critical mass of religious material. For Suchocki, as for many other scholars, learning is the sina qua non of the ministry. Her contribution has been to emphasize that the manner in which one acquires and utilizes that learning is equal in importance to the learning itself.

[50] Cannon et al., 203.

[51] Marjorie Suchocki, "A Learned Ministry," Quarterly Review: A Journal of Theological Resources for Ministry 13 (Summer 1993): 9.

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In the work of Henri Nouwen, a different model of the minister emerges, the "wounded healer."[52] The challenge of ministry, Nouwen maintains, is to help people in concrete situations to see and experience their story as part of God's ongoing redemptive work in the world.[53] The minister is one who has also been wounded by life and heals not only other's wounds, but his or her own. The "wounded healer" exposes his/her vulnerability and pain and transforms the wounds into a source of healing for others. The "wounded healer" ministers to wounded human beings as part of a generation living in a suffering world. The "wounded healer" is caring, supportive, accessible, patient.

Nouwen's model of the minister is designed for ministry in its purest sense, uncompromised by institutional priorities and pressures. Theological learning is necessary in this paradigm only if utilized to heal the wounds of the individual, the church, and society. Theological education for Nouwen is more than the mastery of academic knowledge and professional skills; it has more to do with the development of the human qualities that allow for meaningful spiritual encounters.

[52] Henri J. M. Nouwen, The Wounded Healer: Ministry in Contemporary Society (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday and Co., Image Books, 1972).

[53] Henri J. M. Nouwen, The Living Reminder: Service and Prayer in Memory of Jesus Christ (San Francisco: Harper, 1966), 26.

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Nearly a decade after Farley's Theologia, the appearance of two books by David Kelsey reframed the nature of the discussion and advanced a new proposal for theological education. Kelsey divides theological education into two categories: "Athens" and "Berlin." "Athens" symbolizes the type of schooling where paideia, the Greek notion of "culturing" the soul, is the core of education. The Athens model involves personal appropriation of sources and wisdom in a manner that helps to shape one's identity and character formation. It focuses on the student and the student's ability to integrate learning into his or her life. "Berlin" symbolizes the "interconnected importance" of two enterprises: Wissenschaft, orderly, disciplined critical research; and professional education for ministry. The Wissenschaft model is based on scientific scholarship and the dispassionate evaluation of texts. The goal here is the acquisition of research skills and the pursuit of knowledge. Theology is studied as a science, not as a way to understand God. The professional aspects of the "Berlin" model involve learning theory which one can apply to professional practice.

Each of these two models of education has a variety of implications for theological education, from curriculum to the relationships between faculty and students to the nature of faculty evaluation and promotion.[54] Kelsey argues that

[54] Kelsey, Between Athens and Berlin, 12.

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although theological schools did not become research universities, they still sought to adopt the "Berlin" approach. Faculty are still evaluated by their publications. Seminaries are accredited by secular bodies, and curricula are based on the acquisition of knowledge and professional skills. Yet it is the "Athens" model, Kelsey argues, that motivates the vast majority of the students who come to seminaries seeking their own spiritual growth.

In To Understand God Truly, Kelsey develops his own proposal for theological education. He begins by asking three primary questions: (1) how should the course of study be unified; (2) what is the nature of theological education in a pluralistic environment; and (3) how can theological education be made concrete?[55] Like Farley, Kelsey is concerned with the question of unity.

> What is theological about a theological school? A theological school is a group of people who engage in a set of social practices whose overarching end is to understand God more truly.[56]

This goal is directly linked to the minister, who seeks to help people understand God's essence, and to the purpose of the church itself. For Kelsey, clarity about theological education is derived from clarity concerning the role of the minister which, in turn, derives from the church's clear

[55] David H. Kelsey, To Understand God Truly: What's Theological about a Theological School? (Louisville: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1992).

[56] Kelsey, To Understand God Truly, 108.

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sense of its own mission and purpose.[57] The attempt to understand God "more truly" integrates the "Athens" and "Berlin" models of education. Understanding God truly becomes concrete in the institutional, social, and cultural context of the seminary.[58]

Kelsey is aware of the pluralism in the Christian community and the myriad ways in which Christian life can be practiced.[59] He utilizes G.K. Chesterton's expression, "the Christian thing," to refer to many aspects of Christian practice: "scriptures in various traditions of interpretations and use, God as described in those traditions, Jesus as described . . ., patterns of worship, social action, structures of polity, etc."[60] The Christian practice which takes place in the church forms a framework for the theological school curriculum: (1) how does one understand God and Jesus; (2) how do congregations define who they are; (3) what role do scriptures and theology play in the education, preaching, social action, and worship of the church; and (4) what are the criteria by which churches govern and evaluate themselves? Addressing these questions necessitates the study of a variety of subjects--"texts, patterns of communal and individual life, traditions of

[57] Kelsey, Between Athens and Berlin, 72.

[58] Kelsey, To Understand God Truly, 182.

[59] Kelsey, To Understand God Truly, 196.

[60] Kelsey, To Understand God Truly, 203.

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thought and ritual practice, moral codes, etc."--and the use of different methods of inquiry--"sociological, anthropological, psychological, philosophical, historical."[61] The theological unity of this course of study is that it leads the individual to a "truer understanding of God."

Kelsey's notion that a theological school should be based on the "lens" of the church and "the Christian thing" does not infer that study of the church is at the core of the curriculum. He retains all the traditional subjects. His innovation is the idea that every subject studied should be influenced by the question:

> What is that subject matter's bearing on, or role in, the practices that constitute actual enactments, in specific concrete circumstances, of various construals of 'the Christian thing' in and as Christian congregation?[62]

That "the Christian thing" is manifest in the congregation is what makes the congregation relevant to theological education. While the theological school needs to function as a separate entity, it is always and necessarily in relationship and in tension with the church.

Kelsey is not concerned with assigning specific courses but in attempting to articulate the seminary's overarching goal. He asks three pivotal questions: what is the nature of "the Christian thing" (constructive theology); how does

[61] Kelsey, To Understand God Truly, 205.

[62] Kelsey, To Understand God Truly, 207.

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one faithfully express "the Christian thing" (critical/ practical theology); and is its expression true (apologetic theology)?[63] Kelsey's constructive theology asks both descriptive and normative questions about how congregations perceive "the Christian thing." His critical practical theology attempts to understand whether the church practices its values. Finally, his apologetic theology seeks to understand whether "the Christian thing" being practiced is true, and what are the criteria that justify it.

In his discussion of curriculum, Kelsey distinguishes between theory--that is, the purpose of the course of study --and practice, meaning its implementation in North American higher education, where curriculum refers to the discrete departments in which courses are organized. He indicates that where there are difficulties with a school's course of study, the same two questions are often posed: (1) what are the core courses of the program and in what order should they be offered, and (2) what special provisions can be made in the course of study for particular students that will reflect their backgrounds and interests? But he does not attempt to address these issues at length, preferring to dwell on "the overarching goal of the course of study."[64]

Like Farley, Kelsey rejects the "clerical paradigm." His approach attempts to synthesize rather than to fragment.

[63] Kelsey, To Understand God Truly, 207.

[64] Kelsey, To Understand God Truly, 211.

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He refutes strict practical/theoretical and academic/professional distinctions as false dichotomies. The goal of theological education is to develop capacities for different types of action, requiring both "theory," the knowledge of generalizations, and "practice," the ability to relate to the specific situation.

Kelsey's unifying goal for the theological school is that it "cultivate and nurture in them [the students] a range of capacities and abilities in relation to understanding God."[65] The seminary does not exist in isolation; it lives in relationship with the church. By utilizing the church as the base for its course of study, the seminary is deeply rooted in the practice of "the Christian thing." Yet by remaining focused on its core purpose of helping students to understand God, it maintains integrity as an independent entity which is distinct from the utilitarian purpose of preparing leaders for the church.

Charles Wood supplements Kelsey's "theory" and "practice" approach to theological inquiry with his discussion of "vision" and "discernment" as critical capacities for the minister.[66] According to Wood,

> vision, like its ancient counterpart theoria, points to a general, synoptic understanding . . . an 'overview,' a group of things in their wholeness . . . a unity of connections. . . . Discernment points to insight into particular

[65] Kelsey, To Understand God Truly, 237.

[66] Wood, 79.

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things or situations in their particularity.[67] Vision and discernment are both theoretical and practical, unified by theological reflection and inquiry. For Wood, the focus of theological education is the cultivation of theological judgment,[68] the acquisition of the habitus - the capacity for vision and discernment. In Wood's curriculum, the unifying principle for all courses is the cultivation of aptitude for theological inquiry.[69] Although in most seminaries the majority of courses are explicitly non-theological, they must all be implicitly theological. The curriculum should encourage integration and foster an environment where students can make connections. Wood's model is not the "clerical paradigm," but it acknowledges that professional training needs to be part of the theological curriculum. He does not want the professional aspect relegated to a subordinate department of practical theology, skills, or technique. Reflecting on practical issues, e.g., the nature of a sermon, also entails systematic theological reflection, questioning one's own religious identity as well as mastery of homiletical skills. Wood's proposal calls for a cultivation of skills that enable one to utilize both vision and discernment in practice.

[67] Wood, 67-68.

[68] Wood, 93.

[69] Wood, 94.

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During the past decade, much attention has also been given to the subject of "formation." In 1985, George Schner argued that formation is "the key unifying concept in theological education."[70] This notion of formation is more expansive than the Catholic tradition of spiritual formation as a separate discipline. It is the underlying principle of all the academic and practical disciplines that comprise theological education. Schner defines it as

> the development of that creative ability . . . which issues in the activity of thinking, speaking, and acting which attempts the construction of concepts and languages for the self-world-God-relations. . . . It cannot be done in a vacuum, totally freely but is possible only within both a faith tradition and the academic community.[71]

A supplementary volume in 1988 of Theological Education focused exclusively on formation. George Lindbeck views formation "as the deep and personally committed appropriation of a comprehensive and coherent outlook on life and the world."[72] Other scholars distinguish between character and spiritual formation and seek to assess their compatibility with theological education. There is clearly a call for the minister to go through a formation process

[70] George Schner, "Formation as a Unifying Concept of Theological Education," Theological Education 21 (Spring 1985): 95.

[71] Schner, 100.

[72] George Lindbeck, "Spiritual Formation and Theological Education," Theological Education 24, supp. 1 (1988): 12.

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which will foster an integration between the intellectual and the emotional, the practical and the spiritual, the outer proclamations and the inner yearnings.

To comprehend fully the nature and dimensions of theological education, one must take into account the place of religion in society as well as the role that contemporary social realities play in forging the parameters of the modern-day ministry. Perhaps the challenge of ministry in the late twentieth century is best reflected in Reinhold Niebuhr's 1928 journal entry where, after describing the minister's potential role in other people's lives, he adds:

> Here is a task which requires the knowledge of a social scientist and the insight and imagination of a poet, the executive talents of a businessman and the mental discipline of a philosopher. Of course none of us meets all demands made upon us. It is not easy to be all things to all men . . . our task is not specific enough to make a high degree of skill possible. . . .[73]

Niebuhr could hardly have conceived of the world fifty-five years later: the technological and computer revolution, the information explosion, the environmental threats, the proliferation of nuclear weapons throughout the world, the drastic increase in violence, the urban insurrections, the tenuousness of modern life. Nor could he have imagined the changing role of religion in America. Authors such as Harvey Cox, Robert Bellah, and Martin Marty have written

[73] Reinhold Niebuhr, Leaves from the Notebook of a Tamed Cynic (1929; reprint, Louisville: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1980), 138.

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about the secular society and the marginalization of religion. The open, free society, which has fostered individuation and created an American civil religion, has diminished the centrality of religion more than any anti-religious attack. Religion has become private and diverse. As one minister reflects, "The concept that a community can set standards, adopt values, capture conscience, and become authoritative in the life of human beings is not obvious in our culture, and it falls apart without it."[74] The ability of religious norms to inform any kind of standard has become increasingly difficult. Religion is now voluntary, optional, often peripheral, and in competition with other ways of finding meaning, fulfillment, and happiness.

The ministry today is very different from when Andover opened its doors. The seminary graduate now enters a world where participation in religion requires a conscious choice and where the coercive authority of religion has disappeared. Today's religious leaders can exert their authority in persuasive ways alone. The need has emerged to train clergy who can draw upon the resources provided by their traditions, exhort their followers to pursue certain paths, and model patterns of behavior their congregants will desire to emulate. Paul Wilkes has articulated the need for a new type of clergy:

[74] Robert N. Bellah et al., Habits of the Heart: Individualism and Commitment in American Life (New York: Harper and Row, 1985), 240.

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> We want them to be people who in some tiny way reflect the mercy and goodness of the God we want to know, not only his judgment. We want them to be people who see the goodness in us that we have yet to unleash, the potential within us to transcend our differences. . . . We are looking for those who will help us find that voice deep within us which is not our own, but calls us to do what is right.[75]

The discourse on theological education of the past two centuries, and particularly of the past decade, has sharpened the focus on preparing the leaders who will respond to Paul Wilkes and his contemporaries. Although the four-fold curriculum remains (with some modifications) the governing paradigm of North American Protestant theological education, recent criticism testifies that theological educators are deeply concerned about how to best prepare the church's future leaders. The nature of the church, the role of the minister, and the essence of seminary education are all receiving renewed attention. The literature of the past decade is an attempt to reclaim religion's role in the secular society. The discourse attempts to validate and affirm the value of religion and the pursuit of religious knowledge. The reconceptualizations of theological education are attempts to reclaim the importance of the seminary, the minister, and the church.

Ministers serve in a society where other professionals are becoming more and more specialized in their knowledge

[75] Paul Wilkes, "The Hands That Would Shape Our Souls," Atlantic Monthly, Dec. 1990, 88.

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and in their function. In an extensive study of the ministry undertaken in 1980, Schuller, Strommen, and Brekke examine many of the problems associated with the ministry as a profession. They classify the ministry as a profession because it demands mastery of a discrete body of knowledge, teaches a particular set of skills, and binds its members to a code of ethics.[76] Yet they point out that for ministers, this definition of their role has caused great frustration and insecurity. If the minister is to be considered a professional, what are his/her specific expertise and skills? Henri Nouwen poses the question: "What is there beyond professionalism - is ministry just another specialty in the many helping professions?"[77]

The models of ministry discussed above--the Practical Theologian, the Pastoral Director, the Wounded Healer, the Christian Bricoleur, the Learned Minister, to name only some--attempt to define the role of the minister. In a society where doctors and lawyers have become increasingly more specialized in their practices, the minister is still called upon to be a "jack-of-all-trades." Although some ministers specialize in counseling, education, or youth

[76] David S. Schuller et al., eds., Ministry in America: Report and Analysis, Based on an In-Depth Survey of 47 Denominations in the United States and Canada, with Interpretation by 18 Experts (San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1980), 5.

[77] Henri J. M. Nouwen, Creative Ministry (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday and Co., Image Books, 1971), xviii-xix.

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work, most continue to function as life-cycle officiant, administrator, counselor, teacher, preacher, interfaith spokesperson, exemplar of Christian values, and more. No one can succeed at all of these functions. "Only one minister in a thousand may be equally strong in the pulpit and in pastoral work, and the effort of that man to do both results not infrequently in practical suicide."[78]

While multiplicity of function is difficult to diminish, clarification of role helps to create a cohesive approach to all ministerial duties. It can foster an authenticity and self-confidence in the minister's daily activities. It would also have obvious consequences for the development and implementation of seminary education and would cause the framers of that education to confront some of the following questions.

What is the nature of the theological school? What are its unifying principles? How should the curriculum be organized? How can the professional/academic, theoretical/practical dichotomies be diminished? What courses should be offered in the curriculum? How does teaching in the seminary differ from that in the university? Is seminary education professional training, like law or medicine, or is it the study of theology? Can a non-hierarchical, collaborative mode of learning be fostered in the seminary? As has been shown, various answers have been given to these

[78] Harper, 57.

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questions. Perhaps the real value of the questions resides in the process that has elicited them. The questions and answers are not static but fluid in light of ever-changing social realities.

As noted in the previous chapter on rabbinical curriculum evaluation, the debate on Christian theological education is largely confined to faculty. Laity, alumni, and students are often offered the opportunity for input, but are rarely included in the decision-making process. Although many ministers have expressed the sentiment that "ministry today is generally discontinuous with the preparation provided for it,"[79] it does not appear that the alumni's input is given extensive consideration, nor have the alumni played an active role in the discourse on theological education. It is interesting to note that even in the Hough and Wheeler book in which Hopewell proposes the congregation as the focus for theological education, all of the responses to his "congregational paradigm" are written by seminary faculty. Perhaps by involving more of the constituent groups in the discourse, different models and new concepts of theological education would emerge.

Of the specific curriculum proposals discussed above, e.g., those of Hough and Cobb, Reynolds, and Hopewell, none, to my knowledge, has been adopted by any seminary. Although

[79] Charles R. Feilding, Education for Ministry (Dayton: American Association of Theological Schools, 1966), 15.

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Hough and Cobb do not see their proposal as a radical departure from the traditional curriculum, by offering different foundational principles they do, in fact, propose a new paradigm. Adopting any one of their suggestions is threatening, as it calls upon faculty to view their disciplines in new ways and asks them to devote more of their time to integrating the "academic" with the "practical." This is not likely to be done in a context where seminary faculty are evaluated in the same fashion as university faculty; that is, by the quality and quantity of their publications. The discussion of the Hough-Cobb proposals is likely to be limited to the theoretical realm given the implications it would have for the faculty in practical terms.

What emerges from much of the recent literature on Protestant theological education is the need for greater integration of theoretical and practical study in the curriculum of the seminary. A more integrated course of study provides a framework for continued critical discussion of theological education and its implications for a church struggling to bridge the gap between the religious and the secular. Charles Wood's categories of "vision" and "discernment" link the theoretical and the practical. It appears that the practical courses--commonly referred to as the arts of ministry courses--have an easier time integrating learning with practice. But integrating the

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academic courses with practical ministry is a much more difficult task. If not done carefully, it runs the danger of compromising the ideal of learning by reducing it to utility. As it stands, the responsibility of integration is still placed more on the student than on the faculty.

The extensive discourse of Protestant theological education places the concerns which have emerged out of the curriculum review in the Jewish seminaries into a larger framework. The articulation by Protestant theological educators of specific models of ministry and curricular proposals, faculty reflections on the nature and unity of theological education, and analysis of the relationship among church, minister, and seminary all bear upon the fundamentals of rabbinical education. The fluid state of modern theological education in North American Protestant seminaries is a reflection of the contemporary struggle to infuse the secular culture with a spiritual dimension. It is a strategy for retaining traditional religious values amid competing tides of change. In this respect, no less than in many others, Jewish and Christian religious educators have much in common, and much to learn from each other. The next chapter seeks to bring this widened perspective to the formulation of a new paradigm of religious training for the contemporary rabbi.

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CHAPTER 4

Creating a New Curriculum: Education for the Contemporary Reform Rabbi

Two thousand years ago the role of the rabbi was radically different than it is now. The ancient rabbis were known for their mastery of oral tradition, their ability to interpret Scripture, and their skill in relating their knowledge to the issues of daily life. Religious authority was transmitted from master to disciple, just as Moses had ordained Joshua and transferred to him the mantle of leadership. By the end of the second century, semikhah (rabbinic ordination) signified the competence to teach Torah and decide matters of Jewish law (halakhah). Rabbinic learning was deemed a religious act in itself, based on the principle that study leads to the fulfillment of the divine commandments (mitzvot).[1] The first rabbinic academies (yeshivot) were devoted to the rabbinic elaboration of Scripture. In the early centuries of the common era, Babylonia emerged as the intellectual center of Jewish life, and it was there, as I have shown above, that the profile of the rabbi as scholar was classically defined.

By the tenth century, major Jewish communities elsewhere in the Diaspora had eclipsed Babylonia. As Jewish governance became decentralized, the rabbi's role changed. Halakhic adjudication, ritual supervision, and communal

[1] Babylonian Talmud Kiddushin 40b

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leadership became his primary functions. By the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, rabbis were formally compensated by their communities for the services they rendered. The rabbinate was transformed from a vocation to a profession.

Until the nineteenth century, the education of rabbis was confined to the yeshivah, the academy of higher Jewish learning available to any male Jew who wished to study. The primary subject was still the Babylonian Talmud. Yeshivah study aimed not just at the mastery of texts but at the development of the student's moral character, ethical behavior, and religious piety. The primary purpose of yeshivah study was to render the student a learned and observant Jew. The most capable of the students often became communal rabbis, who possessed singular authority in the self-governing structure of Jewish life.

However, the Enlightenment in Western and Central Europe and the revolutionary turmoil which arose in the closing decades of the eighteenth century soon eroded this status. As the doors of western society opened, major Jewish populations entered the secular world, leaving behind the enclosed Jewish community and the coercive authority of the rabbi. Outside the traditional communities of Eastern Europe, rabbinical courts lost their jurisdiction over Jewish life. The domain of the rabbi contracted from the community as a whole to the congregation of a particular synagogue.

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The development of modernist Jewish religious denominations in Judaism reflected these major shifts in Jewish life and rabbinical function. No longer did the rabbi serve, even in much of the Orthodox community, as a judge. Rabbis began to function more like Protestant clergy, preaching, officiating at worship services, conducting life-cycle events, visiting the sick, delivering invocations and benedictions, and raising funds for charity. The role of the rabbi was thus transformed from that of its historic antecedents. Meanwhile, responding to the changing dimensions of Judaism and rabbinic vocation, the seminary replaced the yeshivah as the primary mode of rabbinical training. While its curriculum was still centered on the mastery of classical texts, its approach was that of the modern university and it was designed for the professional preparation of rabbis. The secularization, or at least the acculturation, of the rabbinate had begun.

Most problematic for the contemporary rabbi has been the loss of traditional rabbinic authority that accompanied the dismantling of the political structure of the community. Secularism has led to a diminished role for religion as a guiding force in the life of most human beings in the Western world. The role of the rabbi, as outlined in the preceding paragraph, is radically different from that of any rabbi prior to Jewish emancipation. This change in role has led to significant tension in the rabbinate. The rabbi is

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often frustrated by the multiplicity of demands and the feeling that there is no unity to his or her activity. The loss of ascribed authority, the awareness of diminished influence, and the increasing assimilation of the Jewish faith community have placed an inordinate amount of pressures on rabbis. Thus, there is an urgent need to reassess the role of the rabbi in the modern world and to clarify the unifying principles of the rabbinate in contemporary society.

The rabbinate's recognition of all the above has led to a widely acknowledged identity crisis. Role confusion based on the dissonance between congregational expectations and rabbinical understandings of the office has affected virtually every aspect of rabbinic vocation, including the manner in which rabbis are trained. While most congregants seem to see their rabbis as pastors, the rabbis are still principally trained in classical textual and academic disciplines and they still appear to cherish self-images of power and authority.

The place to define the rabbinical role and to prepare for what is expected of the rabbi is the seminary. During the past decade, each of the major rabbinical seminaries, Orthodox (RIETS), Conservative (JTS), Reform (HUC-JIR), and Reconstructionist (RRC) has sought to evaluate its curriculum in recognition of these realities. In varying degrees, each of the seminaries has increasingly devoted

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attention to professional development courses, fieldwork, and integration of academic and practical courses. The 1988 curriculum review of HUC reflects one rabbinical seminary's attempt to cope with the transformation of Jewish religious life and the nature of today's rabbinate.

The College's founders and early leaders viewed the College as a seminary and devised the curriculum to include the major disciplines of Jewish learning: theology, Bible, rabbinic literature, history, liturgy, and some professionally-oriented courses. This basic curriculum predominated throughout the twentieth century, although some major revisions occurred, most notably the instruction in modern Hebrew, the development of professional practica, and the introduction of the Year-in-Israel program.

The curricular reform process at HUC that led to the 1988 report involved faculty, students, laity, and alumni. Each group saw the priorities of rabbinical training in different ways. Faculty were primarily concerned with academic instruction and scholarly achievement. Alumni focused on strengthening the curriculum in areas that would have better prepared them for their professional careers. The laity desired rabbis who were better trained in counseling, group process, and leadership skills. Students expressed their desire for both Jewish knowledge and spiritual growth. Although the Task Force reflected on the tensions inherent in these various priorities, it did not

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advance an argument as to which ones should take precedence at HUC.

The Task Force defined the role of the rabbi as "innovator of Torah" and called for four major curricular revisions: in orientation, the Hebrew language program, clinical education, and spiritual development. What emerges from the Task Force Report is still the model of the rabbi as scholar. The emphasis on Torah, i.e., Jewish learning, is underscored throughout the Report. Yet what is undeveloped is the role of innovator, the one who brings the texts to life. The skills required for this task are given a subordinate place to the role of pure academic learning. HUC, like the other seminaries, has refused to compromise the academic integrity of the curriculum. Instead, it has simply called for more professionally-oriented courses, attention to spiritual development, and integration of the professional and academic dimensions. The HUC rabbinical curriculum proposal reflects a consciousness of a changing social reality and the importance of providing for the non-academic dimensions of a rabbi's education. However, HUC and the other seminaries ultimately uphold the primacy of the academic. There have been modifications in curriculum at HUC and at the other seminaries, but no fundamental change.

Because the role of the rabbi in America has become quite similar to that of the Protestant clergyperson, the

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efforts of Protestant theological educators are, as I have discussed in the previous chapter, pertinent to Jewish seminaries' attempts to confront the problems posed by change. Several Protestant theological educators in the past decade have focused on the need for unity in theological education, calling for a diminishing of the traditional dichotomy between the professional and academic. They have constructed new models of learning that are non-hierarchical and collaborative, and they have proposed an integration of the academic with the personal, religious, and professional domains.

Yet their work has not been fully realized. Protestant seminaries continue to struggle with a lack of clarity regarding the minister's role. The expansion of the course of study leaves them open to the charge of "curricular sprawl." Protestant seminaries, like their Jewish counterparts, are still based on a classical curriculum. While more courses have been added to the curriculum that reflect issues of contemporary society and ministry, Protestant theologians and educators have not been fully successful in articulating a model of integration between academic and professional learning that is so essential for the modern ministry.

In an increasingly secularized and fragmented world, both rabbinical seminaries and Protestant divinity schools must attempt to integrate their curricula. They must

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understand that the role the clergyperson plays in affirming religion's importance in people's lives is contingent on a curriculum which assists the clergyperson in integrating the various aspects of one's life. Only such clarification will prepare the clergy for the challenge of the modern setting.

Twenty-five years ago, a prominent Reform rabbi, Levi Olan, recognized the dissonance between the role and the training of the rabbi.

> The critical issue of the rabbinical seminaries in America is not a change in the curriculum, a sport engaged in by faculties when they don't know what to do. . . . What we face is the bald fact that the whole program of rabbinic training in America may be irrelevant to the new and changed nature of the Jewish community and congregations. . . .
>
> The time has come for the Jewish community to examine its program of rabbinic training imaginatively and daringly.[2]

Today, Olan's critique is no less relevant. The curriculum revisions of the 1980s failed to produce a model of rabbinical training that is either imaginative or daring.

Perhaps the most innovative current rabbinical curriculum is that of the Reconstructionist Rabbinical College. The descriptions offered in the catalog reflect a program where a sense of community is genuinely sought, where the religious life is valued, where professional training is taken seriously, and where integration between professional and academic requirements is considered

[2] Levi A. Olan, "The Rabbi in a Secular World," Reconstructionist 35 (4 July 1969): 15.

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important. The most likely reason that RRC has succeeded in offering a different kind of curricular paradigm, at least in theoretical terms, is that the seminary is new, created only twenty-five years ago. The other seminaries, in contrast, are steeped in traditions that are at least one century old in America, with yet deeper roots in Europe. It is clearly much harder to transform a heritage than it is to create ex nihilo. Yet such a transformation is greatly needed in the major denominational seminaries if they are to produce rabbis who will serve effectively in American synagogues.

While the major seminaries have given a fair amount of attention to professional training--as evidenced in the HUC curricular proposal that devotes approximately one-quarter of the program to professionally-oriented courses--they have not succeeded in integrating the academic with the professional and the religious, in developing a plan for religious formation, nor in identifying the critical skills needed for an effective rabbinate. The faculty, although sympathetic to the professional and religious concerns of the students, still place scholarship at the top of the seminary's hierarchy of educational values. The old model remains in place. A new model is needed.

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A NEW PARADIGM FOR RABBINICAL EDUCATION

This attempt to create a new theoretical model for rabbinical education is structured as follows:

1. Curriculum Theory - broad philosophical and methodological considerations;
2. Rabbinical Model - a definition of the modern rabbi which guides the new curriculum;
3. Learning Environment - critical areas outside of the "explicit curriculum" and course of study;
4. Categories of Knowledge - organization of the course of study into pedagogical units facilitating the education of rabbis;
5. Text Interpretation - methodological approaches to Scripture and classical rabbinical literature;
6. Additional Objectives of the Curriculum - issues including formation and professional development which influence the entire curriculum; and
7. Course of Study - description of a proposed five-year rabbinical curriculum.

I. Curriculum Theory. Curriculum in this proposal refers to all aspects of activity at a rabbinical seminary, with the course offerings serving as only one aspect of the curriculum, albeit the most central one. Elliot Eisner's delineation of the three curricula that are present in all schools offer a helpful construct for assessing seminary

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education.[3] These are the "explicit curriculum," the "hidden curriculum," and the "null curriculum." The "explicit curriculum" is the course of study and the educational goals that the school specifically defines. It is found in the school catalog, in course descriptions, and by reviewing the academic disciplines in which the faculty have been prepared. The "hidden curriculum" involves the parts of the education program that are transmitted in the overall educational and social culture but are not explicitly taught. Eisner discusses qualities like initiative and competition in this regard. He cites the example of the arts in elementary school, which are often left for late afternoon, and argues that "although such decisions are not intended to reflect to students' value judgments about the significance of various subject areas, in fact, they do. Students learn in schools to read the value code that pervades it."[4] For Eisner, the "hidden curriculum" of a school can teach many intellectual, social, and personal qualities although they are not a formal part of the educational mission. The "null curriculum" focuses on all that is not taught in the

[3] Eisner, "The Three Curricula That All Schools Teach," chap. 4 of The Educational Imagination, 87-107.

[4] Eisner, 92.

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"explicit" or "hidden" curricula and is left unattended to in the school. Eisner realizes that curricula all reflect choices and argues that the content material or the intellectual and emotional processes that are not touched upon implicitly or explicitly have consequence for learners and for their perceptions of the world. He concludes that most of what is taught in schools is bound by tradition and convention, and thus the canon for the "explicit curriculum" rarely changes.

Eisner's divisions are extremely useful for the creation of a new paradigm of rabbinical education. The concept of the "hidden curriculum" is of particular value in the seminary, reflecting the formative activities that occur both inside and outside of the classroom and offering a mechanism for understanding the implicit messages of seminary training. Formulation of the "explicit curriculum" should ideally be congruent with what is communicated in the "hidden curriculum." Discussion of the "null curriculum" should also be an ongoing part of curricular review, asking what is not included in either the "explicit" or "hidden" dimensions of rabbinical education. These categories can serve as important fundamental tools for the development of a new paradigm.

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II. Rabbinical Model. Prior to developing a curriculum, one must have a clear understanding of the model of the rabbinate for which the seminary is preparing its students. Recently proposed models of the rabbinate and ministry can help to define the emerging role of the contemporary Reform rabbi. Hough and Cobb's conception of the minister as "Practical Theologian," Reynold's "Christian Bricoleur," together with Shapiro's spiritual guide, Karff's counselor and comforter, and Katz' fellow-seeker, lay the foundation for the view of the rabbi as religious mentor and counselor.[5] The role of mentor has been described as follows:

> Mentors are guides. They lead us along the journey of our lives. We trust them. . . . They embody our hopes, cast light on the way ahead, interpret arcane signs, warn us of lurking dangers, and point out unexpected delights along the way. There is a certain luminosity about them, and they often pose as magicians in tales of transformation, for magic is a word given to what we cannot see, and we rarely see across the gulf.[6]

Rabbis as religious mentors are guides who provide Jewish direction through the journey of life. Daloz

[5] These models were discussed in Chapters 1 and 3.

[6] Laurent A. Daloz, "Education as a Transformational Journey: The Role of Teachers, Advisors, and Mentors as Guides," chap. 2 of Effective Teaching and Mentoring: Realizing the Transformational Power of Adult Learning Experiences (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers, 1986), 17.

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emphasizes the importance of telling and listening to stories in understanding and shaping life.[7] The rabbi as religious mentor listens to the individual's story and shares both the stories of Judaism as well as his or her own story in guiding others to finding an anchor in Judaism that will help sustain them and give their life meaning. As religious counselor, the rabbi engages in a process of dialogue and guidance, informed by Judaism and a variety of counseling methods that help individual congregants to address the spiritual dilemmas of their lives and to find meaning in transformative moments--moments which redefine or reshape one's life story.

As religious mentor and counselor, the rabbi offers access to the tradition with her or his knowledge of the sources and, more importantly, possesses the ability to acquire the necessary information. Secondly, the rabbi is a facilitator of transcendent moments--such as naming a baby when one might simultaneously experience the mystery and potential of human life as well as the power of God's creation. The rabbi seeks to find these moments not just in life-cycle rituals but in all

[7] Daloz, 18.

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activities, e.g., the temple Board meeting, the youth group retreat, or the hospital visit. Finally, the rabbi is a co-seeker with his or her congregants, who, by teaching, counseling, and preaching, empowers and inspires them in their quest for religious meaning. These three defining attributes of the rabbinate embrace all that the rabbi does as counselor, pastor, preacher, teacher, and administrator, and they offer a definition of rabbinical leadership for which an educational paradigm can be constructed.

Yet this definition of the rabbinical role is not complete. As Jack H. Bloom has explained, the rabbi is also "a symbolic exemplar who stands for something other than one's self."[8] As "symbolic exemplar," the rabbi is more than a counselor, teacher, or facilitator. Even in a world where the rabbi no longer commands the authority or position of old, the title still conveys a sense of religious charisma, a connection to tradition and history, and a spiritual ideal of Jewish life. A layperson may visit a sick person in the hospital several times but it is the rabbi's visit that is often credited

[8] Jack H. Bloom, "The Special Tensions of Being 'The Rabbi,'" Sh'ma, A Journal of Jewish Responsibility 20/386 (Jan. 1990): 41.

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as instrumental in the person's recovery. The rabbi's status as "symbolic exemplar" still informs his or her role as religious mentor and counselor.

Nor does the proposed model of rabbinical leadership discard the requirement of academic learning. Still critical for the rabbi is the command of Jewish knowledge. It is learning that empowers one to serve as religious mentor and counselor, transmitting theological, historical, cultural, and literary tradition to the next generation. Yet the rabbi's role is not just that of transmitter but of transformer, changing people's lives and deepening their perspective. This function in particular bears close resemblance to the role of the ancient rabbi.[9]

The rabbi as religious mentor and counselor would provide guidance to a generation of Jews seeking a religious and ethical anchor in a secular world. The rabbi can help congregants to see their identity struggles, personal problems, and questions of faith through the lens of Judaism. Interpreting

[9] According to Steven D. Fraade, "The sages sought to transform themselves into a cohesive society whose discourse and deeds would make them worthy and capable of transforming, in turn and in time, the practices, structures, and self-understanding of Jewish society more broadly." See From Tradition to Commentary: Torah and Its Interpretation in the Midrash, Sifre to Deuteronomy, SUNY Series in Judaica (Albany: State Univ. of New York Press, 1991), 121.

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religion for today's Jews requires not just stimulating their minds but also nurturing their souls and touching their hearts. The religious mentor and counselor personalizes Judaism by creating the environment in which Jews can make connections with their faith.

III. Learning Environment. The preparation of contemporary rabbis, which is the transformation of students into religious leaders, serves as the goal of this curricular suggestion. There are aspects of seminary education outside of the "explicit curriculum" which need to be addressed. I describe below three of the areas which deserve the most attention.

A. Seminary Culture. In order to shape rabbis who can work in a collaborative manner, who can create safe and nurturing environments for their congregants, and who are respectful and understanding of their congregants' needs, all aspects of seminary life must model these values. The seminary environment includes faculty, staff, and students. The manner in which a student is treated by the financial aid officer or the way in which a faculty member greets the receptionist are all being observed by the students. The behaviors exhibited are part of the "hidden

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curriculum," communicating to the student that values of human dignity, honesty, and compassion can be present in all situations. The rules and regulations imposed by the seminary and the ways in which they are communicated offer many implicit lessons for the students. They can be empowering, asking students to take responsibility for their learning and growth, or they can be hierarchical, based on control and power, communicating to students that they are merely consumers who are not really valued. It is critical that the seminary administration be intentional in creating an environment where all aspects of seminary life are seen as educational opportunities.

B. Faculty Posture. The faculty play the central role in the transmission of the seminary's ideals not only by teaching the "explicit curriculum" but also by communicating the values of the "hidden curriculum." Faculty need first to be scholars: trained in an academic tradition, informed of the latest research in their respective fields, and active contributors to the discourse of their disciplines. Yet to teach in a seminary, they must be more than scholars. It is essential that faculty also serve as teachers

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and mentors to the students. They should be individuals who understand and value the profession of the rabbinate and share a deep commitment to preparing students for their chosen vocation. Faculty members need to be aware of the distance between their level of scholarship and the level that students need to understand. They must be willing to make themselves available to students to discuss matters related to the student's academic, professional, personal, and religious growth. These requirements of faculty should be taken into equal consideration with scholarly achievement in evaluation for appointment, promotion, and tenure. Thus, the seminary must be prepared to offer and support ongoing learning opportunities for faculty to develop mentoring and teaching skills. Also, a seminary should be cognizant that not all faculty can necessarily flourish in all three areas--scholarship, pedagogy, and mentorship. The seminary needs a balance among faculty members who are gifted in one or more of these areas.

Locating the seminary in an urban environment enhances the possibility of drawing upon other academics and rabbis who have particular specialties. Part-time faculty

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can play a critical role in serving as mentors and as role models.

For the "explicit" and "hidden" curricula to be effective, the faculty must be deeply committed to their success. This includes the willingness to teach in an interdisciplinary matter and openness to teaching one's discipline in the context of a different set of organizing principles.

C. Curricular Evaluation. This process cannot be left to periodic reviews or relegated to task-oriented goals (e.g., should this particular course be included or excluded from the course of study?). Curricular review must be an ongoing evaluation of all aspects of the curriculum, "explicit," "hidden," and "null," reviewed systematically by faculty, alumni, students, and laity. Annual forums should be held where rabbis and lay leaders can dialogue with faculty. By continually asking what is being taught, why is it taught, and how is it taught, the seminary greatly improves its prospects for providing education that is effective and relevant to the contemporary world.

With respect to the "explicit curriculum," HUC has historically allocated each of the

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disciplines a set number of courses. From the turn of the century onward, a certain canon was defined as constituting the core of essential Jewish knowledge for the rabbi. Rabbinical school curricula of all the denominations continue to be dominated by this canon which centers on the study of classical texts. Yet as David Lieber, president emeritus of the University of Judaism (the Conservative Movement's seminary on the West Coast), has pointed out, "The study of classical texts alone, no matter how profound or hallowed, is not sufficient to prepare a person for religious leadership in our age."[10] What is needed is a new way of organizing the texts and studying them.

IV. Categories of Knowledge. Lawrence Hoffman, professor at HUC in New York, argues that the historic ways of organizing Jewish knowledge are not relevant to today's world.[11] He writes that "when congregants ask about life as Jews, rabbis respond with statements about literature without even realizing that they are not always discussing the

[10] Lieber, 228.

[11] Lawrence A. Hoffman, "Jewish Knowledge: Redrawing the Map," Conservative Judaism 38 (Winter 1985-86): 36-43.

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same thing."[12] No longer, Hoffman argues, should Jewish knowledge be defined by textual mastering alone. Rather, it is the ability to utilize those texts in finding Jewish meaning that is crucial. His concern is how the tradition speaks to the contemporary person, and whether a way of reconceptualizing Jewish knowledge can be found to address the current social reality. Hoffman's notion of rabbinical training includes the following goals:

> to develop a new set of questions that presuppose a redefinition of the very nature of Jewish knowledge, as a coherent set of organizing principles for the life of its books; to train our rabbis to demonstrate the artistic coherence of those principles, both in their lives and in a new language of discourse that characterizes their teaching; and thereby, to work together with the laity in recreating meaningful Jewish communities of tomorrow.[13]

Given this objective, a new paradigm for rabbinical education, must articulate the categories by which all courses will be organized. Like Kelsey and Hough and Cobb who argue that a seminary's course of study should be influenced by guiding concepts, the curriculum proposed here is divided into six categories of Jewish knowledge

[12] Lawrence Hoffman, 39.

[13] Lawrence Hoffman, 43.

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formulated for the particular purpose of educating rabbis.[14]

A. Jewish Peoplehood Through the Ages - how Jews from ancient times developed their collective Jewish identity, its many variations through the centuries, and the valorization of certain aspects of identity.

B. Transformative Moments in Jewish Life and Literature - e.g., the destruction of the Temple in Jerusalem, the exile from Spain, the birth of the State of Israel. Texts will be examined for their religious, historical, and social significance.

C. Contemporary Issues and Jewish Values - the insights and teachings of Judaism in relation to modern-day challenges, e.g., bioethical questions, immigration, the environment, criminal justice, global problems, personal relations.

D. The Hermeneutics of Jewish Literature - an understanding of various forms of textual interpretation and of the intrinsic value of studying text.

[14] The categories that I am proposing are not exhaustive but suggestive of ways in which Jewish learning might be reconceptualized.

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E. Jewish Constructions of Life - how individual Jews, as reflected in Jewish literature and practice, have understood life, God, and human responsibility.

F. Jewish Leadership - how leaders have confronted the challenges of their time by employing resources of the past and novel insights from the present; different models of Jewish leadership which have emerged in particular periods; and the development of a personal rabbinical leadership style.

All of the courses currently offered in the classic disciplines--rabbinic literature, Bible, philosophy, and history--would still be included in the course of study but with course content designed to meet the category objectives. This can be done without compromising the scholarship of the particular discipline. In fact, exposing students to the scholarship of various academic disciplines is a critical aspect of the learning process. However, the above categories would now inform the material chosen and the process by which it is studied.

V. Text Interpretation. In this paradigm, scriptural and rabbinic texts would be approached at three levels:

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A. Understanding the text in its historical context, i.e., the message that the original writer tried to convey. For example, the story of the binding of Isaac (Gen. 22) as a polemic by the ancient Israelites against the prevailing religious environment of the time (tenth or eleventh century B.C.E.) when human sacrifice was still common.

B. Looking at how the text has been interpreted at different times throughout Jewish history. During medieval times, the binding of Isaac was seen as a metaphor for Jewish suffering.

C. Exploring how the text might inform the student's own life - personally, spiritually, and professionally. The Isaac story might be looked at in terms of intergenerational relationships, the notion of personal sacrifice, or the question of whether God tests human beings today? As a leading Jewish educator, Barry Holtz has pointed out that this method of study can only be accomplished if the teacher is willing to speak out of his or her own experience and share not just why the material is academically significant but in what ways it is important in the teacher's

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own life.[15] What would be required to implement this approach to text study is a willingness on the part of the faculty to reshape their courses to address the overarching category objectives and to facilitate the pedagogical process informed by the three levels of text inquiry.

VI. Additional Objectives of the Curriculum. These guidelines organize and influence the other components of the curriculum. The professional development courses are informed by classic Jewish texts and the text courses are influenced by the modern disciplines of sociology, psychology, and anthropology as well as by professional concerns. Greater attention is given to developing expertise in counseling, teaching, communicating, managing, supervising, and facilitating. While these areas also have an academic core and a pertinent body of literature, they focus primarily on how these skills connect to the rabbi as religious mentor and guide. Professional development courses are assigned the same number of units as courses in the classical

[15] Barry W. Holtz, "On the Training of Rabbis: Scholarship, Belief and the Problem of Education," in The Seminary at 100: Reflections on the Jewish Theological Seminary and the Conservative Movement, eds. Nina Beth Cardin and David Wolf Silverman (New York: Rabbinical Assembly and the Jewish Theological Seminary of America, 1987), 195-204.

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disciplines, acknowledging the key role of formation in the training of the contemporary rabbi.

In the proposed curricular paradigm, issues of religious formation should emerge in all classes. Yet in addition, formal and informal opportunities for religious growth and development would be made available. It would embody what Kelsey, as described above, has labeled the "Athens" model, an education that nurtures the soul. The proposed curriculum seeks to accomplish this goal through faculty mentoring, ongoing meetings with rabbinical advisors from the community, therapeutic counseling, exposure to other spiritual disciplines, retreats, journal writing, and other programs sensitive to the student's religious and personal growth. Serious attention would be devoted to the cultivation of the inner life. Although one might be reticent to assign course credit as it might compromise the personal aspects of this experience, it would be important to state that religious formation is given significant value by the seminary.

A major emphasis of my proposed model of rabbinical education is the requirement of fieldwork and clinical education, much like that described in the Hough-Cobb curricular paradigm. Supervision by a rabbi in a congregational or other rabbinical

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setting or by a supervisor in clinical pastoral education offers the student a systematic way of reflecting on his or her professional growth. Each student would be required to have two experiences, one in a congregation and one in a hospital during the five years of the program. Clinical Pastoral Education is instrumental in helping the students to develop a pastoral identity, skills in pastoral care and counseling, and interpersonal strength and confidence. Working with hospital patients also provides an ideal context for students to deal with their own issues of mortality and fear. Addressing and comforting the dying patient, for example, forms a nexus of theological conviction, pastoral counseling, and self-insight. The congregational internship allows the student to work with congregants under the supervision of a mentoring rabbi. Both student and mentor would be required to attend seminars which would help guide their relationship and the reflection they would be sharing together.

A significant part of the "hidden curriculum" envisioned here would be the fostering of imaginative and creative thinking. Many synagogues have become dull and staid; they are in urgent need of bold and imaginative programming. Assignments in

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the new curriculum would be designed to encourage new programmatic initiatives and alternative models of synagogue organization, worship, education, and celebration.

The proposed curriculum would also be informed by feminist concerns and structured in a way that would foster "mutuality, friendship, and cooperation." As feminist theologian Ellen Umansky has pointed out, it is vitally important to create "a non-patriarchal, non-androcentric Judaism - a Judaism in which the experiences of both men and women are seen as central."[16] Therefore, a conscious effort would be made to analyze the material from a variety of modern views, including feminist perspectives. Critical in implementing the curriculum would be an examination of the different ways in which women and men learn and being responsive to both. Specialized courses in "Feminist Theology" and "Jewish Women's Spirituality" would be offered. In addition, faculty would be conscious of the inclusion of women's voices in the course material studied. The contributions of Jewish feminism would be present in

[16] Ellen M. Umansky, "Beyond Androcentrism: Feminist Challenges to Judaism," Journal of Reform Judaism 37 (Winter 1990): 33.

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both the learning process and course content. Nevertheless, and despite the fact that the vast majority, if not all, of classical texts were written by men, these texts would still constitute a core element in rabbinical education. This tradition, as Umansky herself indicates, must remain central to rabbinical education for it cannot be abandoned without destroying the foundations of Jewish faith and identity.[17]

Integrated into the curriculum would also be a flexibility which is responsive to the different backgrounds, interests, and questions of the particular student. Rabbinical students, like all seminary students, are a diverse group of people. They include students from a wide range of ages, Jewish backgrounds ranging from secular to Orthodox as well as Jews-by-Choice. They have different sexual orientations and are coping with various personal hurts inflicted upon them in their lives. They also possess disparate intellectual, academic,

[17] Ellen Umansky, in a discussion in the Journal of Feminist Studies in Religion 1 (Spring 1985): 123-27 on the "Sources of My Theology," adumbrates this point by developing the argument that as both a feminist and as a Jew, the totality of the Jewish experience is important to her. She argues for "the filtering of halakhah through the lens of feminist vision. To do so would mean rejecting its androcentric bias while retaining those teachings . . . that address us - men and women" (p. 126).

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personal, and professional abilities. Other identifiable differences could undoubtedly be enumerated. A well-implemented curriculum should take cognizance of these differences and allow each student to flourish in his or her unique way and help transform each individual into a religious leader.

The theoretical curriculum that follows is a curriculum of intentions. It is based on a new role for the rabbi and informed by both the rabbinical school curricular reviews of the 1980s and by the discourse of contemporary Protestant theological education. It is based on the premise that rabbinical education must be reconceptualized in order to prepare rabbis for their work in the contemporary world. The curriculum would be guided by the vision of rabbinic vocation, reorganized categories of Jewish knowledge, and a revised methodology for learning set out in this chapter and defined below.

Learning in the classical disciplines remains central to the course of study. The innovation of this curriculum is that it is intentional and explicit about the other parts of the curriculum. Learning in a collaborative manner, pursuing one's religious and professional identity, applying Jewish

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values to contemporary problems, acquiring more self-insight, learning how to utilize the texts in finding Jewish meaning--these objectives are as significant as scholarly achievement in the shaping of the rabbi as religious mentor and counselor.

The theoretical curriculum proposed below reflects an attempt to reconceptualize seminary education. It affirms the imperative of Jewish learning but seeks to reframe the categories of Jewish knowledge as they apply to the contemporary rabbinate. It emphasizes the neglected components of preparing for religious leadership: professional skills, religious growth, and self-insight. In fact, it views classical learning and professional development as inseparable. The academic/professional tension is eradicated by the integration of the two. Ideally, the curriculum would challenge the student to develop his or her own unique style.[18]

VII. Course of Study

Year 1

The program would be based in Jerusalem with a focus on Hebrew language acquisition and the Israel

[18] Silver, 13. As cited in Chapter 2, Silver compares the role of the rabbi to that of the artist and the need for each to develop a unique personal style.

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experience. Prior to beginning the program, all students would be required to take at least one year of college-level Hebrew. The choice of texts for the Hebrew program would be guided by the organizing categories discussed above. In the course of the year, there would be a two-week intensive seminar on major themes in contemporary Jewish life and on issues of Jewish professionalism. Students would be required to meet regularly with a rabbinical mentor and to write a series of reflection papers on religious issues which emerge from living in Jerusalem. Students would also participate in a seminar exploring the religious significance of Jerusalem for Jews, Christians, and Muslims. At the conclusion of the first year, a final paper would be required integrating the Israel experience, the religious quest, and personal growth.

Year 2

Fall	Spring
* 4 text-based courses	* 4 text-based courses
* rabbinical school seminar	* rabbinical school seminar
* religious leadership - facilitator of life-cycle	* seminar in education and teaching

Fieldwork - limited to 8 hours per week; must focus on teaching or youth work.

"Interterm" (January) - week-long retreat on the religious experience,

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focusing on Jewish spirituality.

The summer following the second year is spent in Clinical Pastoral Education.

Year 3

Fall	Spring
* 3 text courses	* 3 text courses
* rabbinical school seminar	* rabbinical school seminar
* religious leadership - counseling and communicating (includes homiletics)	* religious leadership - counseling and communicating (includes homiletics)
* personal exploration experience (therapy, meditation, etc.; not at HUC)	* personal exploration experience (therapy, meditation, etc.; not at HUC)
* fieldwork as student rabbi in small congregation	* fieldwork as student rabbi in small congregation

During January's "Interterm," students spend one week in another faith's religious setting, e.g., Catholic retreat house, Buddhist meditation center.

Year 4

Fall	Spring
* 3 text courses	* 3 text courses
* 1 interdisciplinary course	* 1 professional skill course
* rabbinical school seminar	* rabbinical school seminar
* issues in contemporary life - responding from Jewish values	* issues in contemporary life - responding from Jewish values

During January's "Interterm," students spend one week either in an inner-city setting or on Outward Bound-type program.

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Year 5

Fall	Spring
* 2 text courses	* 2 text courses
* major integrative project	* interdisciplinary elective
* rabbinical school seminar	* rabbinical school seminar
* religious leadership and professional development seminar	* professional skills course

During January's "Interterm," students participate in a week-long retreat exploring various spiritual disciplines and methods of keeping spiritually vital.

Requirements for Ordination (after year in Israel)

Text Courses: 24
(as distinct offerings or in interdisciplinary approach)

Bible - 4
History - 4
Hebrew Language and Literature - 2
Philosophy/Theology - 4
Rabbinics - 6
Electives - 4

In the first year and a half, students take required courses and after that choose at their discretion from the different areas.

Religious Leadership and Professional Development

Required:
Facilitator of Life Cycle
Education and Teaching
Counseling and Communicating (year-long)
Issues in Contemporary Jewish Life (year-long)
Electives - 3

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Rabbinical School Seminar

This seminar is required each semester for four years and integrates the student's experience academically, personally, professionally, and religiously. Each semester a different theme would be chosen, e.g., community, suffering, justice, humility, healing, leadership, which would allow students and professors to synthesize Kelsey's "Athens" and "Berlin" models of education. The goal is for students to articulate their visions of the rabbinate in written logs and indicate how they individually would apply that vision in practical situations. Also, this seminar will be based on The Mud Flower Collective's position that the telling of one's story is a central component of the clergyperson's personal formation. The seminar would call upon the students to share their learning from the requirements described below.

Interterm Experiences

These intensive one-week experiences are critical to that part of the curriculum that can be labeled as formation. Placing the student in an environment outside of the seminary and away from the normal academic and professional pressures can allow them to explore in greater depth religious and

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psycho-social issues. Whether the student is challenged religiously, personally, socially, or physically, the goal of this program is to nurture self-understanding and self-confidence.

Writing Assignments

Each semester students must write two lengthy research papers in areas they choose. By the end of the fourth year, one paper must be written in each of the major disciplines. In addition, an integrative paper on the student's personal, religious, professional, and academic growth is due at the end of each year.

Rabbinical Mentoring

Locating the seminary in an urban center with a large pool of available clergy allows for each student to work on an ongoing basis with a rabbinical mentor. The mentor helps the student to explore issues of the rabbinate and, through a guided mentoring plan, helps to nurture the student's Jewish and rabbinical identity. The seminary should also have a full-time rabbi on campus to work with each student.

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Personal Exploration

For one year of rabbinical school, students would participate in a structured experience of their choice--preferably therapy--exploring their identity, learning about their weaknesses and strengths, and learning how to differentiate personal needs from professional expectations.

Summer Reading

Each student would be required to read two classics each summer. A list of recommended great books (both secular and religious) would be compiled by a committee comprised of faculty, laity, and alumni. They would be books that had shaped their lives and their thinking. Students would be accountable for this reading by articulating their insights in written and oral presentations for the Rabbinical School Seminar.

Clinical Experience

Summer between second and third year in Clinical Pastoral Education
Summer between third and fourth year in congregation
2 years as student rabbi
1 year as teacher, youth advisor

As student rabbis in small congregations, students would be visited by a supervising rabbi who would provide them with feedback and input on their leadership style and effectiveness.

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Interdisciplinary Offerings

Courses that integrate textual study and professional concerns, utilizing the insights of Jewish tradition combined with the findings of sociology, psychology, or anthropology in exploring issues of contemporary Jewish life.

Issues in Contemporary Life - Responding from Jewish Values

This seminar addresses major issues of the contemporary world: ecology, population, violence, multiculturalism, etc., and develops approaches to them based on Jewish values.

Formation

Character and religious development are conscious goals of the curriculum and are manifest in the rabbinical school seminar, the Interterm experience, the personal exploration, and the clinical experiences.

This curriculum proposal is an attempt to remedy the unease, role confusion, and stress which, as described in the first chapter, many modern rabbis experience. By seeking to clarify the role of the rabbi, by allotting more time for reflection and personal growth, by integrating academic, professional, and religious learning, and by

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redefining the culture of the seminary, the hope is that each student will develop a clearer vision of his/her rabbinate. Greater self-esteem will emerge, as well as a better understanding of one's strengths and weaknesses and enhanced coping abilities for managing stress. Ultimately it is hoped that students will gain insights into how to live more balanced and spiritually rewarding lives.

Implementing this kind of curriculum would be extremely demanding. It would require major shifts in theory and organization, an infusion of financial resources, a different understanding of what it means to serve on a seminary faculty, and the willingness of students to internalize their learning and to struggle with their doubts and questions. It would require that faculty, administrators, laity, alumni, and students be open to innovation and willing to take risks.

These are not easy obstacles to overcome. However, the importance of this theoretical curriculum lies not merely in whether it would be fully adopted, but whether it would open a constructive dialogue on the future of rabbinical education. The training of rabbis is not an esoteric subject but rather an urgent area of concern for the Jewish community. The curriculum of a rabbinical school serves as a lens into the larger issues of Jewish life. The subtle shifts which a seminary makes in preparing its students will impact the future religious leadership of the Jewish people.

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A curriculum that takes seriously and is intentional about the religious development of the students will influence not just the students' own religious growth but the laity which he or she will teach and guide in the years to come. A theoretical curriculum serves its purpose if different aspects of it serve as a foundation for discussion and reflection, and in some cases, implementation. Even if such discussions do not produce tangible results, the process of debating these curricular ideas will have a salutary impact on both rabbinical education and the Jewish community.

Judaism, like other historic religious traditions, offers a long perspective on how to make life more meaningful. Few Jews in modern-day America have tapped the depths of their religious tradition. The synagogue, like the church, has become increasingly marginalized because religious leaders have failed to convey a compelling message. The opportunity to shape religious leaders rests largely in the seminary. If the curriculum and its implementation are effective, the seminary can provide its students with the knowledge, skills, self-insight, and confidence that are needed for careers in religious leadership. The human being's quest for meaning today is no less urgent than it was in the ancient world. The role of modern rabbis, although radically different, is as important as that of their historic forebears in helping people to find and forge deep meaning in life.

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